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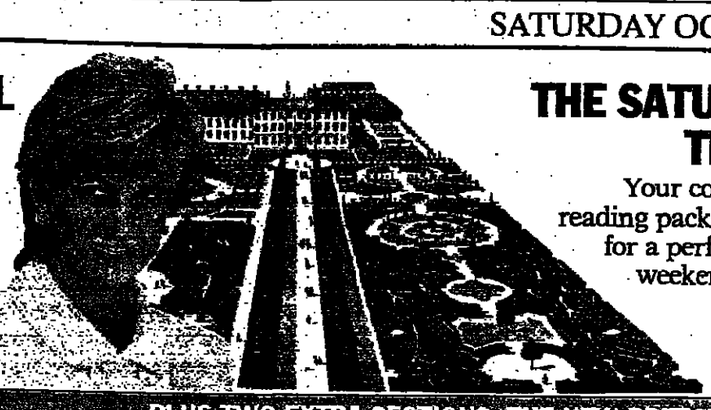
THE TIMES

50p

No. 66,018 SATURDAY OCTOBER 11 1997 http://www.the-times.co.uk

A MEMORIAL GARDEN FOR DIANA

WEEKEND



THE SATURDAY TIMES

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Libraries will put grannies on the Net

BY PHILIP WEBSTER AND DOMINIC KENNEDY

EVERY public library in Britain should provide access to the Internet, according to the ground-breaking report which recommends a vast upgrade of lending libraries.

Tony Blair has asked Chris Smith, the Heritage Secretary, to draw up proposals by the end of the year based on the study by the Library and Information Commission, to be published next week.

The far-reaching plans to hook up Britain's libraries to the Internet would cost £750 million over five years. There is no question of the Government coming up with that sum on its own so Mr Smith has been asked to work out ways in which the programme could be introduced through partnerships between central and local government and the private sector.

Mr Smith is expected to say next Wednesday, when the report *New Library: The People's Network* is unveiled, that it could represent "a defining moment" for the British library network.

The report says every public library in Britain should provide access to the Internet. But the price could be the end of the free library service with library users paying to use computers. The involvement of the private sector would break the local authorities' monopoly for the first time.

The report also recommends that Britain's irreplaceable collections of rare books, manuscripts, paintings and historical artefacts should be turned into digital records and stored for posterity in a new-technology "Doomsday Book" of the nation's heritage.

Anybody with a computer, a modem and a telephone line can gain access to the Internet. But there are fears of dividing society into the information-rich and the information-poor as the basic hardware costs more than £1,000.

A ministerial source said last night: "We want every child to be computer literate by the year 2002. How marvellous it would be if we can get Granny on the Internet as well."

Mr Blair found an enthusiastic supporter for the shake-up in Bill Gates, the President of Microsoft and one of the worlds' biggest names in computers, when he visited Downing Street earlier this week.

The authors of the report have been inspired by the Gates Library Foundation, set up by Bill and Melinda Gates to provide $200 million (£125 million) in cash and the same amount in software to public libraries in low-income groups throughout North America.

Mr Blair sees it fitting into his proposals for a national grid for learning. He announced on Tuesday that he had plans to link 32,000 schools to the Internet.

The Government is also keen to allow adults to study for degrees using computer facilities to link students with universities miles away.

Matthew Evans, chairman of the report's authors, said that revolutionary changes in new technology during the next few years would bring about "previously undreamed of" increases in the quality and quantity of detailed information and knowledge available to the public.

Libraries last year raised £12 million in hire charges for videotapes and music CDs, but are prevented by law from charging for the loan of books.

There are 4,759 libraries in Britain, including 693 which are mobile. Book lovers are also served by 19,136 service points in hospitals, prisons and old people's homes.

Times sales forge ahead

Average daily sales of *The Times* last month were 821,000, an increase of 54,600 over August and the biggest achieved by any national daily broadsheet newspaper.

Meanwhile, sales of *The Daily Telegraph* are dropping, according to the critical longer term index of circulation averaged over six months. Between April and September, compared to March to August, average sales of *The Times* were up by 14,200, against a fall of 1,350 for *The Daily Telegraph*.

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MARC ASPLAND

England captain Paul Ince: "If they say anything about Paul Ince, they have to say he is a hard tackler, but he tackles fair. He is a hard man in that respect; he wants to win"

"As we had nothing on tonight I've invited the Barringtons over for bridge"

English eyes on Rome — and Glasgow

BY ALAN HAMILTON

THE lowly paid underdogs of Latvia could today guarantee England's footballers a World Cup bonus payment of £200,000 each before they even kick a ball against Italy tonight.

It works like this. Under the byzantine play-off system, if Latvia defeat Scotland in their match in Glasgow this afternoon, England should qualify for the World Cup finals even if their new captain, Paul Ince, leads them to defeat in Rome. The players would then be in line for hefty bonuses and licensing royalties from a £3 million pot to be paid into team funds.

As English eyes turn to the match against Italy tonight, Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, said yesterday he expected Scotland to win — which would require England at least to draw to qualify automatically.

The worst possible scenario for Hoddle is a Scottish win coupled with his own defeat. That would consign England to a two-leg play-off with one of the other runners-up, which could mean a trip to Russia or Yugoslavia.

In an interview with *The Times* today, Ince dismisses suggestions he is a dirty or malicious player. "If they say anything about Paul Ince, they have to say he is a hard tackler, but he tackles fair. He is a hard man in that respect; he wants to win," says the England skipper, brought in because of fitness doubts about Tony Adams, and with the advantage of a smattering of Italian, having had a brief career with Internazionale of Milan before returning to captain Liverpool. Ince's men stand to enjoy some of the most generous bonuses seen in English football. In addition to a £1,500-a-head match fee on top of income from playing international football that can exceed £50,000 a year, the players stand to share a pot of £500,000 bonus payments from a consortium of leading commercial sponsors including Green Flag, Carlsberg, Procter & Gamble, Mars and Coca-Cola.

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Steve McManaman, page 36
Scotland's task, page 37
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Judge orders acquittal of officers accused of rape

BY TIM JONES AND ADRIAN LEE

SIX young Army officers accused of gang-raping a student were yesterday acquitted on the orders of a judge but their reputations and careers are in tatters.

Judge Julian Hall halted the trial at Oxford Crown Court after ten days, deciding that the woman's account of her alleged ordeal in an officers' mess, was riddled with "dramatic inconsistencies".

But he told the officers: "If six men think it is a good idea to have sex with one woman they run the risk of being accused of rape. I think they have brought this prosecution on themselves." He said the men realised they had gone too far. The episode "was ill thought through by everybody and it does no-one any credit".

Last night the 23-year-old student, the mother of a three-month-old child, said she had "no regrets" about accusing the six of rape, adding "I hope they rot in hell".

All six, from the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, were taken back to a barracks at Abingdon in Oxfordshire last night as the Army confirmed it has begun its own investigation.

As they were acquitted they cannot face a court martial but they could be discharged.

As they walked free, Captain Phillip Bates, 29, Captain Darren Bartlett, 24, Captain Ian Barlow, 29, Lieutenant Matthew Tupling, 21, and officer cadets Nicholas Oettinger, 21, and Andrew Stout, 20, refused to comment.

Will Sheppard, their solicitor, said: "They have all been through what can only be described as a nightmare."

The men were accused of raping the student in a bedroom after cavorting naked in a sauna in the officer's mess at the Royal Military College of Science, at Shrivenham, Oxfordshire, on May 27 last year. The six claimed she had consented to sex.

Student's bitterness, page 3

THE SATURDAY TIMES
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The Saturday Times has grown and improved, with expanded SPORT and more award-winning WEEKEND MONEY pages. The enhanced BUSINESS pages start on page 27. And the expanded WEEKEND section features much more travel

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WEEKEND MONEY GUIDE
This week: PEPS

go
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Visitor
The week's TV and radio

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US rejects Nobel plea on landmines

BY TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

PRESIDENT CLINTON, criticised last night by the new Nobel peace laureate for failing to sign up to a global ban on landmines, refused to alter America's policy towards the deadly weapons.

Congratulating Jody Williams, the co-ordinator jointly awarded the prize with the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, the White House said Washington would continue to work with the UN Conference on Disarmament in Geneva.

Aides said the President had no plans to join the Ottawa process, the treaty calling for a global moratorium which was ratified by 89 nations in Oslo last month. "The President was clear last month that the Ottawa treaty did not address the concerns of the Administration, particularly in places like the Korean peninsula," a National Security Council aide said.

The reaction provoked a stinging riposte from Ms Williams, who described Mr Clinton as "neither a leader nor a statesman".

Landmine victim Chris Moon, whose bravery inspired Diana, the Princess of Wales, said the award of the prize was a fitting epitaph to her humanitarian campaign.

Africa scarred, page 9

Hague apologises for ERM debacle

BY PHILIP WEBSTER, POLITICAL EDITOR

WILLIAM HAGUE yesterday broke with the Conservative past by delivering an unreserved apology to the country for the last Government's "great mistake" of entering the European exchange-rate mechanism.

It was time, he told the Conservative Party conference in Blackpool, to be "brutally candid" about the fateful move in 1990 that led to the mayhem of Black Wednesday and eventually destroyed the credibility of the Tories. "I'm sorry we did it. We should have the courage and the confidence to say so," he said.

Almost everyone thought it was a good idea at the time but the party paid the price, he added. "We went into something when the time was not right and we must never let that happen to our country again."

It was another indication of his decision to take a hard line against entry to the single currency, which he confirmed could not be contemplated in the "foreseeable future."

Mr Hague's decision to apologise and "purge our contempt", as one of his aides put it, brought one of the loudest cheers in his rallying address to the conference.

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Zinfandel?
Didn't we see one on Safari?

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CALIFORNIA

Stand-up comedian delivers his subversion with a wink

MATTHEW PARRIS
CONFERENCE SKETCH

From a Labour leader in Brighton, Britain got Salvation. From the new Tory leader at Blackpool yesterday we had a folksy chat. In nine days we have travelled from Jerusalem to Rotherham.

As a speaker, William Hague is engaging, rather than rousing. He was at his best in the Winter Gardens when he was at his gentlest: poking fun at new Labour, explaining with apparent sincerity the change of heart he urges upon his party.

Attempts to rouse were less successful. A noisy passage about keeping up Britain's defences ("I put Labour on red alert. This is still a dangerous world ...") fell pretty flat, whereas Hague's wry mickey-taking over new Labour's Armani Army delighted his audience. Fifteen years ago, "Let's bomb Russia" would have raised a cheer among Tory representatives. Yesterday, Mr Hague pleased them better with a "Let's bomb Islington" theme.

To draw wild applause with the line "I love Wales" is some *kind of an achievement in* Tory politics. Aides and gag-writers often wince as a tin-eared politician wrecks their lines. But yesterday speechwriters surely looked up in surprise as this most professional of northern stand-up artistes made even indifferent material sing.

There was no Autocue, but a typed text on the lectern. It is always interesting to guess the instincts of a speaker by noting how, in the delivery, he modifies his pre-released script. Whenever Mr Hague veered off the printed track it *was to become more conversa*tional. The more conversational he got, the better it worked. Hague conjures a kind of intimacy, a quietly reasoning style, unusual at Tory (or new Labour) occasions. His trademark is the unspoken wink. Who would have though it possible to draw from so many elderly ladies the knowing laughter *Hague won with his line:* "Mr Blair. Full of this. Full of ... *slight pause* ... that"?

He had the defects of his virtues. An over-long speech included pages of declaratory prose, protesting (too much, and far too often) that Tories have principles, too. The passages dragged.

And can we now have an amnesty on Yorkshire boyhoods? *How many more ref*erences to northern straight-talking can the rest of Britain take? Mr Hague told us about Hague Soft Drinks Ltd's dandelion and burdock brew, Yorkshire farmers' suckler-cow premium blues, his Yorkshire comprehensive, and the lessons you learn about growing up if you are lucky enough to be born in Yorkshire. Voters struggling to make a success of their lives without the advantage of a Yorkshire birthright will grow resentful if we get much more of this.

Still, plainspeaking was effective — almost too effective. *Talking about* Black Wednesday, Hague used a word few have heard from a British politician. "I'm sorry," he said.

Sorry? At first the audience seemed stunned. One lady shouted: "So are we!" Then they clapped. Beneath the folksiness and the charm, this was a subversive text. I noted the line "... you have to give freedom to those who you fear may abuse it ... to those whose values you profoundly disagree with". When, 20 years ago, I suggested almost identical lines to my boss, Margaret Thatcher, also a fairly new Leader of the Opposition, she struck them from my draft.

Hague sounded as though he really meant to change his party. A hint of the dead-weight he must shift lay, perhaps, in the reaction to a line early *in his speech.* "I'd like to tell you about an open Conservatism that ... believes freedom doesn't stop at the shop counter."

There followed a baffled silence, then thin applause.

Conference, pages 12-14

Immigration law changed for gay partners

By Nicholas Watt, political correspondent

FOREIGN nationals in homosexual relationships with British citizens have been given *the right to settle in the United* Kingdom.

In a major liberalisation of immigration guidelines, the Government announced yesterday that it was relaxing the regulations for unmarried couples, covering homosexuals and heterosexuals in *long-term relationships.*

Mike O'Brien, the Home Office Immigration Minister, said that the Government had decided to act because the old guidelines were "unsustainable and may have breached human rights law".

The Government's move was immediately condemned by Conservatives. Ann Widdecombe, the former Home Office Minister, said: "It undermines marriage and secondly it undermines immigration control."

Lord Tebbit said: "It is clear that the Government's policy is to place sodomite marriage on the same standing as the honourable estate of matrimony. Presumably now we will have to endure a succession of real or alleged homosexual partners being brought in to avoid our immigration rules."

Lord Tebbit's comments drew a sharp reaction from Mr O'Brien. He said: "William Hague has called for compassion in their party. This was their first test and they flunked it. The cold, nasty heart of the party has been exposed. It is not the right policy."

Stonewall, the gay-rights pressure group, welcomed the move. Mike Watson, the group's chair, said: "We are very pleased that the Immigration Minister recognises that the policy of the previous Government was unjust and unsustainable. We have had a *very difficult struggle for the* right to live and love the partner of our choice."

Mr O'Brien's announcement, which will come into force on Monday, followed a wide-ranging review by the new Government of regulations applying to unmarried couples, including homosexuals, lesbians and heterosexuals. Under the old guidelines foreign nationals from outside the European Union in such relationships with British citizens had no automatic right to remain in this country.

Mr O'Brien said that the Government was "replacing an unfair policy with a fairer one". But in a attempt to reassure traditionalists the minister said the new criteria would be "strict and much tighter" than for married couples in order to preserve the "special position of marriage".

Under the new guidelines a couple will have to show that they have been living together for at least four years and that they intend to live together for the rest of their lives. Once admitted to Britain the couple will have to show that their relationship has lasted a further year before they are allowed to settle.

Mr O'Brien said: "The key requirement of immigration policy is fairness. The new policy will keep the special position of marriage. But it would be unfair to stop unmarried people in long-standing relationships from being together if they would otherwise satisfy the immigration guidelines and meet certain other criteria, but are unable to get married."

Boris Yeltsin, Helmut Kohl and Tony Blair at lunch in Strasbourg yesterday before the announcement

Yeltsin's Franco-Russian deal undermines Blair's Euro hopes

From Charles Bremner in Strasbourg

TONY BLAIR'S drive for British leadership in Europe was dealt a setback yesterday when Russia, France and Germany agreed to stage an annual summit without inviting Britain.

News of the Franco-German arrangement with Russia was announced by Presidents Chirac and Yeltsin after Mr Blair had already left the summit of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg. Only two hours earlier, Mr Blair, fresh from a visit to Moscow, had outlined the Government's plans to bring Britain into line with the rest of Europe by incorporating the 1950 Convention on Human Rights into domestic law. Britain would "lead the way" in Europe, he said.

The words lost some of their force when a jovial Mr Yeltsin and M Chirac emerged after lunch to announce that they had agreed, with Helmut Kohl, the German Chancellor, to hold annual meetings to review the state of the continent. The meetings would be "an important force, a necessary element in the deepening of peace," M Chirac said.

Mr Yeltsin was delighted with an arrangement that bolsters Russia's ties with the West and which, as he put it, recognises "Russia's place in the European family". Russia, France and Germany had "common problems, common business to discuss", he said.

Tony Lloyd, a Foreign Office Minister, said Britain welcomed the arrangement but acknowledged that no prior warning was given of it. "Of course this is not a snub for Britain. Britain doesn't take part in every relationship across the whole world. We regard this as a very welcome development that enhances Russia's role within the European framework," he said.

Italian officials, irked by their exclusion, muttered about a "Franco-German stitch-up". Despite the British line, one council official described the announcement of the "troika" summit as "weird" because it had been presented in the context of the European club.

EU officials said British exclusion would have been barely noticed under the previous Government, but it carried a message in the light of Mr Blair's European aspirations. He is to host a summit of east European states applying for EU membership in February.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Council 'left hundreds at risk of neglect'

Government inspectors yesterday revealed a catalogue of "fundamental weaknesses" and "failures" in the social services department of Sefton Borough Council, Merseyside. The report said hundreds of vulnerable children and old people had been left at risk of abuse or neglect.

It found that the council had failed to allocate a social worker to nearly 200 children on the council's child protection register or identified at being "at risk". Eight of the council's homes for old people failed to meet health and safety standards, and more than 100 elderly people were stranded in hospital beds because of social workers' failures.

McCartney plea to Blair

Tony Blair was lobbied by one of his childhood heroes yesterday when Sir Paul McCartney pleaded for financial support for his Liverpool Institute for Performing Arts, which is facing crippling debts. During a meeting at Chequers — their first since the election — Sir Paul was expected to tell the Prime Minister that his performing arts school needs millions of pounds to continue.

GPs win medicine war

Doctors can were given the go-ahead to continue to allow their receptionists to dispense prescriptions after a High Court test case brought by pharmacists. The chemists, who receive 94.6p for each prescription they dispense and are reimbursed by the NHS, claimed they were better trained and that doctors usually left the handing over of medicines to their receptionists, putting the public at risk.

Promise for Britain

A British offshoot of the American "Promise Keepers", the organisation which headed a prayer rally of one million men in Washington last week, is to be launched at a rally in London in May. Promise Keepers UK is being set up by English churchgoers to help men recover from what they term "a crisis of identity". Meetings will be held next month in eight churches across Britain. Feet of clay, page 15

Killing was self-defence

A factory worker who stabbed a man through the heart with a penknife in a fight was cleared of murder and manslaughter at Winchester Crown Court. Stuart O'Neill, 32, of Southampton, said he produced his knife in self-defence after Phillip Gray, 24, frightened his dog in Hoglands Park, Southampton, and started to punch him. He said: "I never intended to use the knife."

Guerin murder arrests

Dutch police last night arrested two suspects in connection with the murder of Veronica Guerin, the Irish journalist, in June 1996. Brian Meehan, 32, and John Traynor, 48, both of Dublin, were arrested in Amsterdam after police followed Mr Meehan's girlfriend from Dublin yesterday. All three were taken into police custody. Irish police had issued a warrant for the arrest of Mr Meehan.

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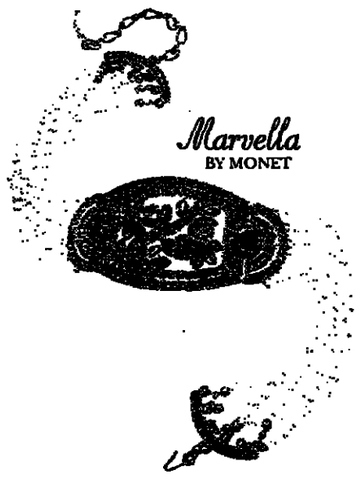
THE CHOKER.



This exclusive seven row faux pearl choker is part of the new 'Heirloom Violet' range by Marvella, now available from the Designer Jewellery Room at Harrods. Its elaborate floral detailing is highlighted by amethyst and clear crystal in an 'antique' style silver setting.

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Police chief to have partner in drug tsar post

By Valerie Elliott and Stewart Tendler

TONY BLAIR is so concerned by the threat of drugs that he has decided to appoint two "drugs tsars" to lead a campaign against the problem.

Keith Hellawell, the outspoken Chief Constable of West Yorkshire Police and a national expert on drug problems, is to lead the work with police and on the ground.

He is to be joined by a second person who has experience of prisons and drug treatment to share the workload. The precise division of *responsibilities and the Gov*ernment's approach to a new national drugs strategy will be announced next week by Ann Taylor, the Leader of the Commons and chairman of a Cabinet sub-committee on drug problems.

The decision to split the role came after ministers found great difficulty reaching a decision about the choice of tsar. Part of the problem may have been that ministers felt that Mr Hellawell, 56, may have been too old to reach out to young people and their drug culture.

But the scale of the task was also a factor which persuaded ministers that they should have two figures at the helm. Mrs Taylor is expected to emphasise next week that the Government has no intention of legalising cannabis.

The tsars are to have special adviser posts in the Cabinet Office. Salaries are not known, but the present maxi*mum salary for a special* adviser is £73,000.

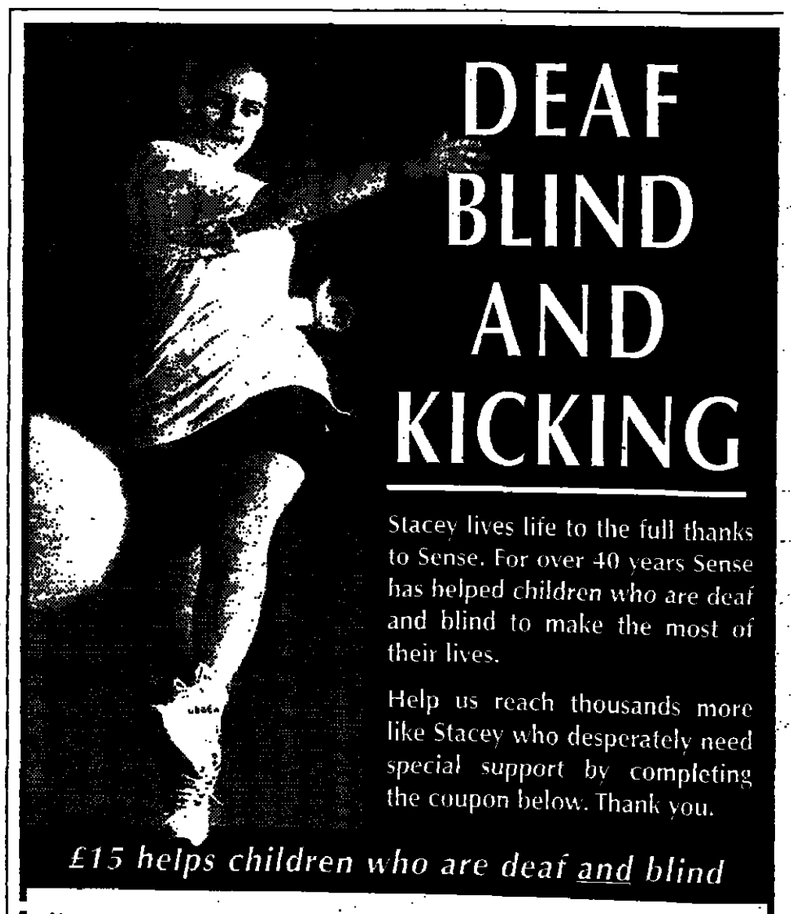
Mr Hellawell, who held his current post for seven years, earns closer to £100,000 and it is possible that Mr Blair might increase the salary of the new job with the agreement of Parliament.

Mr Hellawell, a member of the Home Office's advisory council on the misuse of drugs since 1994, has repeatedly warned about the dangers to society from drug abuse, including telling parents that soft drugs were as much a part of today's youth culture as tobacco was to his generation.

He has also revealed evidence of heroin addicts as young as 12 turning to prostitution, and the need for compulsory treatment of drug misusers.

Mrs Taylor has been privately studying work in Europe on drug problems and spent two days this week in France and Holland. The trip included a visit to a coffee shop in Amsterdam where cannabis is sold for personal use.

Hellawell: to lead work with the police



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I hope they rot in hell, says Army rape claim student

THE student whose gang rape case against six army officers collapsed yesterday said bitterly after they had walked free: "I hope they rot in hell."

The 23-year-old was not in court but made no attempt to disguise her bitterness and said she had no regrets about bringing the case. The woman said she had brought the charges to encourage other women not to remain silent if they believed they had been raped.

Speaking from her parents' home, she said she was "shocked" that the case had collapsed but ruled out any civil claim against the six she had accused. Her hope now was that the men would be thrown out of the Army. "I grew up believing that officers were gentlemen. Now I know different. Giving evidence was a nightmare. I just wanted to cry the whole time."

She said her solicitor telephoned her with the news. "I could not believe it. I just started to cry and cry." She said she now regretted not giving the whole truth about other sexual encounters with soldiers. The court heard that she had previously consented to sex with two of the men. "I omitted details because I wanted them to believe what I was saying. I don't regret reporting it at the time. I did it for other women. I wanted to be strong for them."

She urged others in her situation to tell the whole truth from the start and said those who made rape allegations should retain their anonymity. "If they don't, no one will come forward to report rapes."

Her main priority now was to continue her studies as a computer programmer and raise her three-month-old son. "We will just take it step by step. My parents are being totally supportive but I still feel numb." She declined to name the father of her child, but said he was a close friend who lived near by. They were not together, but remained friends.

Her friends said she admitted to a series of failed relationships, but maintained she never had a reputation for promiscuity. While working at the golf club where she was to meet the six soldiers, she had had a brief affair with her employer, but by the time of this incident she was seeing another man. Although the two were living together, their relationship was "rocky" and had been effectively over before the incident.

The woman was brought up in the military as her father was a sergeant in the RAF. Her friends said that, as a young woman, she was attracted to officers but, because of her own modest upbringing, was in awe of them. As a child, her father's rank denied her the chance to mix with the officer class, so she welcomed the attention of the dashing young men from Shrivenham who drank at the golf club.

She was a familiar figure at the pubs and nightclubs near the military academy and worked part-time as a barmaid. To the soldiers she was an easy target. Studying in a predominantly male environment she was, to use the words of one, "a game-on bird". In an interview with MoD police another of the men described her as a "tart".

Another of the accused, describing sex with the young woman, said he "climbed aboard" her. Ten days before the incident, she marked three soldiers out of ten for their kissing technique at a Swindon nightclub.

THE WOMAN

REPORTS BY MICHAEL EVANS, ADRIAN LEE, TIM JONES, PAUL WILKINSON AND PAUL WHITTAKER

Conflicting stories

IT WAS her best friend's account of the night they spent at the Shrivenham college that undermined the 23-year-old student's accusation of rape.

Although the friend was a witness for the prosecution, the judge said that her account had helped the defence. The telephone call inviting her to take part in group sex with some soldiers she had met at a golf club had clearly indicated that the complainant was considering having group sex.

The complainant had claimed that after they had all gone back to the college from the fête, she had gone with only one officer from the sauna to change her clothes. However, this did not tally with the account given by her friend, who was in another officer's room and said that she had heard laughing and giggling in the corridor outside and that one of the voices was that of the complainant. This had made it clear that there were others and indicated that the complainant was not at that stage under any duress.

THE FRIEND

Ian Barlow

Matthew Tupling

Darren Bartlett

Andrew Stout

Nicholas Oettinger

Phillip Bates

Junior officers told friends any case could ruin careers

AS THE weeks passed, the six junior officers believed they would never be charged with rape. All were ambitious for advancement in the Army, and confided to colleagues that any court case could finish their careers.

Through friends, they knew that the woman was threatening to go to police, but it was nearly six months before Ministry of Defence police arrived with arrest warrants.

In the early hours of December 3 last year, Captain Phillip Bates, of Havana Company of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers, was summoned from the mess to his commanding officer's room at the Bordon garrison in Hampshire. Within hours, the others had been arrested at three other military establishments, including Sandhurst, where cadets Nicholas Oettinger and Andrew Stout were enrolled.

Captain Ian Barlow, the son of a former REME major, was the last to be picked up at his barracks, at Catterick in Yorkshire. Most stood in stunned silence when told the charge.

Lieutenant Darren Bartlett asked: "Am I the only one arrested?" He had followed his father, Frank, into the Army. He was proud of being the son of a career soldier who spent 22 years in the Royal Artillery, rising to captain. The family live in Gosport. A schoolfriend, John Ridley, said: "Darren was always keen to impress his father and follow him into the Army. Of all of us, he was the least likely to do anything like this."

He was among the four in this group who was a student at Welbeck, the MoD's sixth-form college at Worksop, Nottinghamshire, which prides itself on taking only the most accomplished applicants with scientific backgrounds.

Another was Matthew Tupling, a fire officer's son and gifted sportsman, who went to Welbeck from the Danum School in Doncaster, Yorkshire, as one of the top ten pupils in his year. His deputy head there, Alan Mendum, described him as "a very bright lad who decided early on that he wanted to join the Army. He earned the respect of all the staff here."

Tupling admitted during questioning that he urinated on the woman in a sauna, but said he did not rape her: "I am an officer for God's sake — integrity and all that." Tupling's father, David, said: "I was disgusted when I was told the details. Nevertheless, I believe it should never have been brought to court.'

Captain Ian "Harry" Barlow, 29, is attached to the Army Air Corps, 662 Squadron. A graduate of Shrivenham in 1991, he was a close friend of Phillip Bates and Matthew Tupling. The three met serving in Germany in 1992, where they formed the Triathlon Club drinking group. He served in Bosnia, and was visiting his friends when the incident took place. His father Peter, 53, and mother, Sylvia, have lived near Corby, Northamptonshire, for about four years.

In Gateshead, Tyne and Wear, where Andrew Stout grew up and attended Whickham comprehensive school, neighbours said the case forced his separated mother, Pamela, to move house. She told friends she could not face those who knew her, and bought a house six miles away. Her son told police that he found group sex "a weird and sombre" experience.

Phillip Bates, born in Scunthorpe, told police: "I am a typical sexist bloke." He admitted trying to persuade the girl to wear handcuffs taken from the garage of his father. Michael, who was a policeman in Lincolnshire.

Nicholas Oettinger, 20, grew up in Wiltshire. An earlier hearing was told that he was seeking a medical discharge. That is now likely to be refused. Army sources said. His father, David, of Preston, is a former landlord of the Red Lion Inn, in West Dean, Salisbury.

THE SIX MEN

New code to ban antics of the 'Triathlon Club'

THE trial highlighted the antics of the so-called Triathlon Club, with its three disciplines of "booze, birds and brawling", which scandalised senior officers and presented the Army in the worst possible light.

Associates said that three of the six — Captain Phillip Bates, Captain Ian Barlow and Lieutenant Matthew Tupling — had helped to form the club when they were stationed in Germany in 1992. Five of the six accused were studying at the Royal Military College of Science at Shrivenham and the sixth had previously attended the college. Friends said that, at Shrivenham, the five had discussed sex openly, walked naked around the officers' mess and drunk heavily in the local pubs. At the Eagle pub a picture of Captain Bates was pinned to the wall during a caption competition. The winning entry read: "His name is Phillip Bates. He screwed a girl with a load of his mates."

During legal arguments in the trial the court was told that the six viewed group sex with the alleged victim as an initiation rite.

Despite the acquittal of the six officers, what remained on record from the trial was a culture of heavy drinking and extrovert behaviour that will be prohibited under a code of ethical conduct that is to be distributed to every soldier and officer before the end of the year.

Senior officers, who were said to have been shocked by what emerged during the trial, were adamant yesterday that the men's behaviour was "totally inconsistent" with military service. The Army already has discipline and standards guidelines, drawn up by the Adjutant-General, which spell out behaviour that could lead to disciplinary action, including bullying, racial and sexual harassment, drunkenness, drug abuse, and adultery within the military community.

The lurid picture that emerged from the trial will be uppermost in the minds of the army authorities when they decide whether disciplinary action should be taken against the six officers. Based on the standards required of an officer, there seems little chance of any of them being allowed to stay in the Army.

One officer said: "That they will go is cut and dried. There is zero tolerance for unacceptable behaviour like this. They are almost certain to be dishonourably discharged."

THE ARMY

Asian wins £350,000 for council's race bias

BY ALEXANDRA FREAN, LOCAL GOVERNMENT CORRESPONDENT

AN ASIAN computer operator won record damages of more than £350,000 yesterday in what was described as the worst case of persistent racial discrimination ever to go before a court.

Don D'Souza, 62, won the award at the end of a marathon legal battle which started eight years ago after he complained to his employers at Lambeth council, South London, of racial discrimination.

After his victory, Mr D'Souza criticised the council for wasting taxpayers money by trying to "defend the indefensible".

"Had Lambeth acted properly at the beginning and reinstated me at an early stage, the financial loss they imposed on me would have been far smaller. I would have been able to continue contributing to services for the people of Lambeth through my chosen career," he said.

Mr D'Souza started to work for Lambeth in March 1986, and was dismissed in January 1990 after he had complained internally of racial discrimination. He subsequently won five industrial tribunal hearings into his treatment by the council.

One hearing awarded him £8,925 damages under the Employment Protection Consolidation Act, which imposes a ceiling on payouts. In the latest ruling, however, the Employment Appeals Tribunal said that he was, in fact, entitled to a payout under the Race Relations Act, for which there is no ceiling. It calculated his award at £358,288.73 for loss of his job and pensions benefits.

Mr D'Souza's original complaint was that he was denied promotion because of his race. He said he was subsequently victimised by the council simply because he had taken his complaint to an industrial tribunal and was seen as a trouble-maker who had cost his employers a lot of money.

In its ruling, the tribunal said yesterday that but for an unreserved apology from Heather Rabbatt, the present council chief executive, it would have requested a formal investigation of Lambeth's policies and practices in order to "to minimise the risk of a similar occurrence in the future".

The ruling added that Mr D'Souza had been the victim of "shameful" treatment by the council. "In the experience of this court, this is the worst case of unlawful race discrimination that it has ever had to consider. Furthermore, there is no reported case which shows such persistend discrimination against one individual."

Sir Herman Ouseley, chairman of the Commission for Racial Equality, which backed Mr D'Souza's case, said: "Employers must actively seek to eliminate discrimination from their employment practices, ensure that they are providing equality of opportunity and run effective and fair disciplinary procedures."

A spokeswoman for Lambeth council said yesterday that Ms Rabbatt had told the tribunal that Lambeth had been in an "appalling mess" at the time of Mr D'Souza's dismissal and that none of the people involved in his sacking remained with the council.

The council is considering an appeal against the way in which Mr D'Souza's award had been calculated.

D'Souza: he fought an eight-year legal battle

Neo-Nazi jailed over race hate magazine

BY STEWART TENDLER
CRIME CORRESPONDENT

A FORMER National Front by-election candidate who planned to "destroy society" by inflaming race hatred and violence with a neo-Nazi magazine was jailed for 18 months yesterday.

Robin Gray, 35, who stood for election in Hounslow, West London, in the 1980s, was discovered by police with hundreds of copies of a magazine called *Stormer* published by the Combat 18 group. The magazine was linked to a hate campaign against the boxer Frank Bruno's mother and other targets including the Liberal Democrat leader Paddy Ashdown.

Gray, of Stanwell, West London, was jailed for 12 months at Southwark Crown court for two counts of possessing "threatening, abusive or insulting" material with a view to distributing it and stirring up racial hatred. At the time of the offences Gray was on licence from a three-year prison term imposed for a "fascist skinhead" attack on a policeman. The judge ordered he should serve the remaining six months.

Last month Gray's former landlord, Mark Atkinson, 31, from Egham, Surrey, pleaded guilty to publishing two issues and was jailed for 21 months.

BA to change smoke hoods for Sikhs

BY JOANNA BALE

BRITISH Airways agreed yesterday to review the design of smoke hoods for cabin crew after two Sikhs claimed racial discrimination when they were rejected as stewards because of their beards and turbans.

Narinder Singh Roath and Satvinder Sandhu were told that they would have to trim their beards and be willing to remove their turbans in the event of a fire in order to be able to wear the smoke hoods. Cabin crew are not allowed to have long beards because facial hair interferes with the seals around the neck and mouth which safeguard them against toxic fumes.

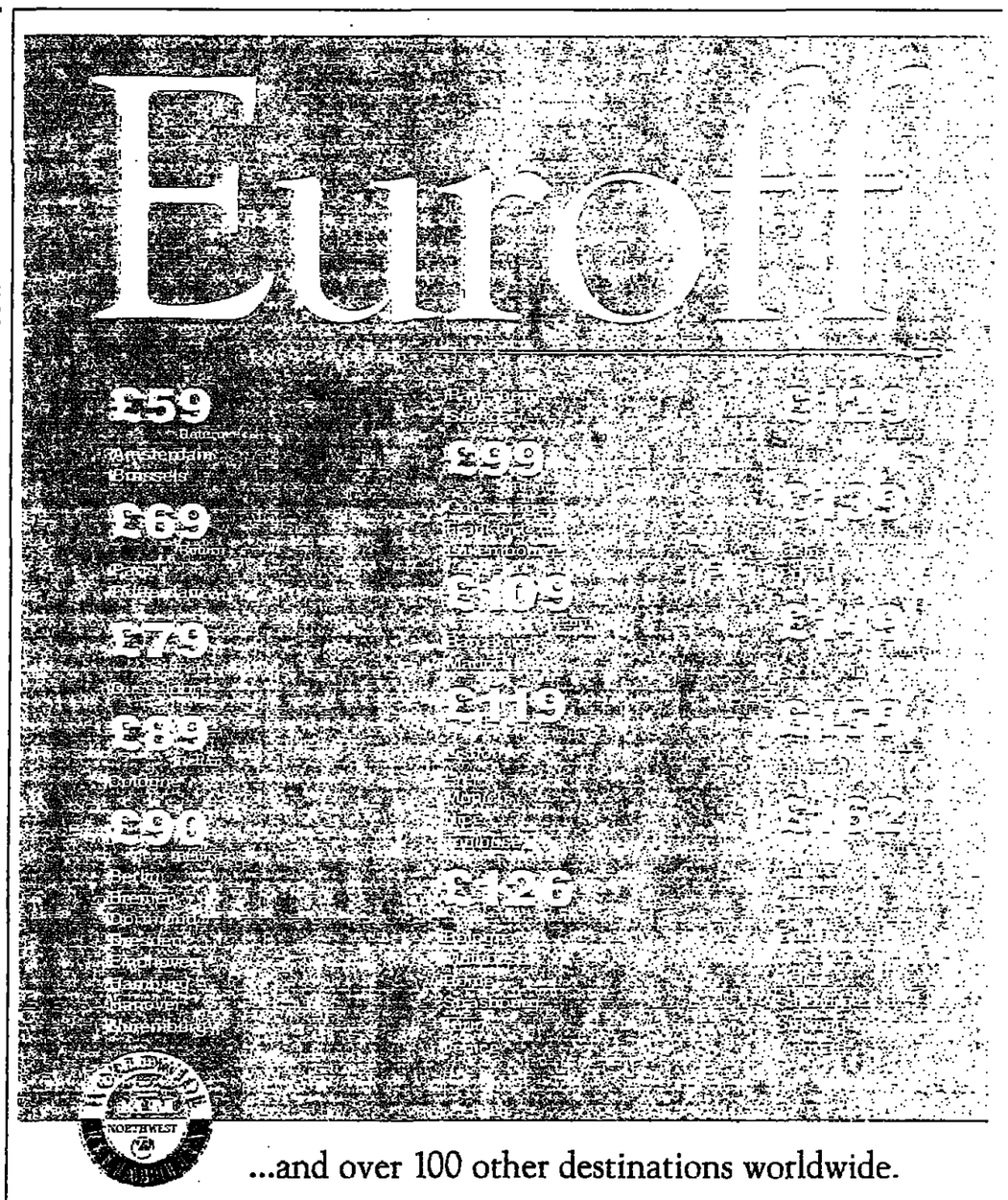
The two men withdrew their claim of racial discrimination at an industrial tribunal yesterday after BA agreed to attempt to develop new smoke hoods, which can be worn by people with beards and turbans, in collaboration with the Civil Aviation Authority and the Health and Safety Executive.

The Dräger safety hoods, distributed to all cabin crew, were introduced after the Manchester air crash in 1985, in which 54 people died. The hoods enable crew to fight fires on board. Pilots and passengers are issued with oxygen masks. Andrew Clarke, QC, for BA, told the hearing in London: "The Dräger hood goes over the whole face. The difficulties are obvious and the difficulties are accepted by experts on both sides of this case. Facial hair which interrupts those two seals is impermissible, whether it is worn by a Sikh or anyone else."

The agreement reached between BA and Mr Sandhu, 24, of Warley, Birmingham, who now works for a marketing firm, and Mr Singh Roath, 27, now a civil servant, also states that the company will report its findings to the Commission for Racial Equality within six months.

Manjit Gill, representing the two men, said they believed the company had not done all it could to employ Sikhs. "We hope a positive development will occur as a result of this case and that those responsible for developing hoods and safety equipment will do so to allow more Sikhs to wear them."

Photograph, page 32



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Never mind Gazza, where's the Raphael?

An elite band of fans are to pay their respects to Italy's finest artists as well as to football, writes **Richard Duce**

A DISCERNING elite has decided that culture and *calcio* — Italian for football — are the perfect mix for a long weekend and has swelled the ranks of fans attending England's crucial match with Italy tonight.

For thousands of English supporters, Rome will only be glimpsed between the airport and the stadium where World Cup qualifying dreams could be won or lost.

But hundreds more are combining the game with visits to Rome's galleries, museums, and shops. Seven members of the Islington Labour Party, former neighbours of Tony Blair, arrived yesterday and hope to visit Rome's galleries tomorrow. The art lover's list includes works by Raphael and Leonardo da Vinci at the Vatican Museum, Bernini at the Museo Borghese, and Etruscan treasures at the Villa Giulia.

To avoid the huge demand for hotel space — Rome is fully booked on Saturday night — the seven have hired an apartment in the city. Tony Banks, the Sports Minister, and the Chancellor, Gordon Brown, are also to attend the match.

For others the game is an occasion around which to build a romantic weekend. Clive Thompson, 43, a management consultant and Arsenal fan, has invested a "sizeable chunk" in four days away with his wife Margaret at a £150-a-night hotel.

Well, he's got to be around here somewhere!

The couple first came to Rome ten years ago on their honeymoon and Mrs Thompson has no intention of seeing the game. "I want to see the Titians at the National Gallery and the statues at the Borghesi museum. We plan to eat well together but my husband is on his own as far as the match is concerned."

Alan Smith, 37, a restaurant manager, arrived at his hotel on the Via Veneto yesterday with his wife Debbie, 31, from Worthing, West Sussex. The couple have spent £350 each for a three-night stay. While Mr Smith has a ticket for the match, his wife is happy to watch it on television. She said: "I plan to see the sights in Rome and perhaps do some serious shopping."

At the Stadio Olimpico, where the match kicks off tonight, Italian touts were offering £80 tickets for £120. However, police insist that anyone who is obviously an English supporter will not be allowed into sections of the ground which have been allocated for Italians.

Police in Rome also revealed yesterday that they will be using a helicopter above the stadium with a direct video link to their control room. It means police can be mobilised within minutes to any potential flashpoint between opposing supporters. More than 2,000 Italian police will be mobilised today in full riot gear and all leave has been cancelled. An extra 1,500 officers from outside Rome have also been drafted in.

The majority of the 10,000 England supporters are expected in Rome on flights this morning. Some 2,000 of them have signed up for "executive packages", which include a match ticket, flights and a night in a hotel for £469.

Five British police officers from the National Criminal Intelligence Service in London are in Rome to help the Italian police spot any potential troublemakers who are known to have previous convictions relating to football. They estimate that between 600 and 700 fans could be swept along by any trouble, but that only 60 or 70 without tickets will be looking for confrontation. Last night only four English supporters had been arrested for drink-related offences.

Superintendent George Robinson, of West Yorkshire Police, who is heading the British liaison operation, said last night: "We don't want people to spoil what should be a wonderful evening for everyone, particularly as England is hoping to stage the World Cup in 2006."

Leading article, page 23
Rome crossroads, page 33
Weekend, page 13

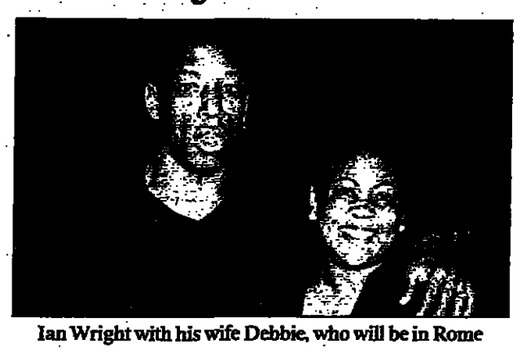
Trophy wives fly out for a Debs' ball

BY DOMINIC KENNEDY AND DANIEL MCGRORY

A FLEET of planes will fly to Rome today bearing England's ultimate weapon to intimidate the Italians: a bevy of footballers' trophy wives. Several are called Debbie.

Their mission is the psychological intimidation of the Italian squad, who have been grimly preparing in an isolated hotel on a mountain in Tuscany. A Football Association source said: "We want to make them think that England are relaxed, enjoying ourselves and preparing for a big family party."

They will be backed by reinforcements of proud parents armed with anecdotes about their sons' school football days. The FA has booked wives, girlfriends, parents, brothers and sisters on 50 aeroplanes. Staff working for Glenn Hoddle have spent 48 hours booking footballers' loved ones on to empty seats on the planes, which are also carrying scores of officials. They have struggled to find hotel rooms, as Rome is also hosting a conference of 2,000 doctors.



Ian Wright with his wife Debbie, who will be in Rome

The women flying to Italy include Debbie Wright, wife of Ian, and Debbie Rodgers, fiancée of David Seaman. Gary and Phil Neville's parents will be there too. Local knowledge will be provided by Clare Ince, wife of Paul, an Italian hand from the days when her husband played for Inter Milan.

Among the absentees is the ultimate trophy girlfriend, David Beckham's Victoria Adams, who uses the professional sobriquet "Posh Spice". She will be rehearsing for a concert in Istanbul.

The FA was inspired by the Ryder Cup wives whose glamorous presence on the greens was regarded as a vital morale booster helping the Europeans to retain the trophy. The English soccer women will be given prominent seats in the stadium.

ALESSANDRO BIANCHI

In gladiatorial mood: English football fans in front of the Colosseum yesterday

Digger firms fined for fatal accident

BY SIMON DE BRUXELLES

TWO plant hire companies found guilty of contributing to a road accident in which five people were killed by the arm of a digger were fined a total of £425,000 yesterday.

The victims died when the arm swung out as the digger was carried on a low loader, tearing off the roofs of four cars coming in the opposite direction at Castle-an-Dinas near Newquay, Cornwall.

The judge at Truro Crown Court said there had been a "complete dereliction of duty" by the companies. Bazeley Plant Hire, of St Columb, Cornwall, and its parent company, Chepstow Plant Hire, of Chepstow, were convicted of failing to ensure people were not exposed to risks to their safety.

The accident happened in December 1995 on a narrow, unlit road because the driver of the low loader failed to pin the arm of the digger or secure it with chains. Judge Graham Cottle said most of the blame must go to Bazeley Plant Hire because it was their responsibility to see that the driver was supervised. That week he had worked 71 hours.

The driver, Mark Wade, 31, who was found guilty of five charges of causing death by dangerous driving, had no safety training and told the court he worked 16 hours without a break on the day of the accident. He is to be sentenced next month.

The judge said: "Elementary and basic safety procedures were ignored and there was a total failure to instruct, train or supervise an employee. It was a complete dereliction of duty." He fined Bazeley Plant Hire £250,000 and ordered the company to pay £45,000 costs. Chepstow Plant Hire was fined £175,000 and ordered to pay £30,000 costs.

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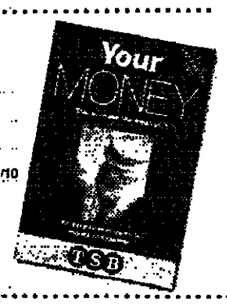

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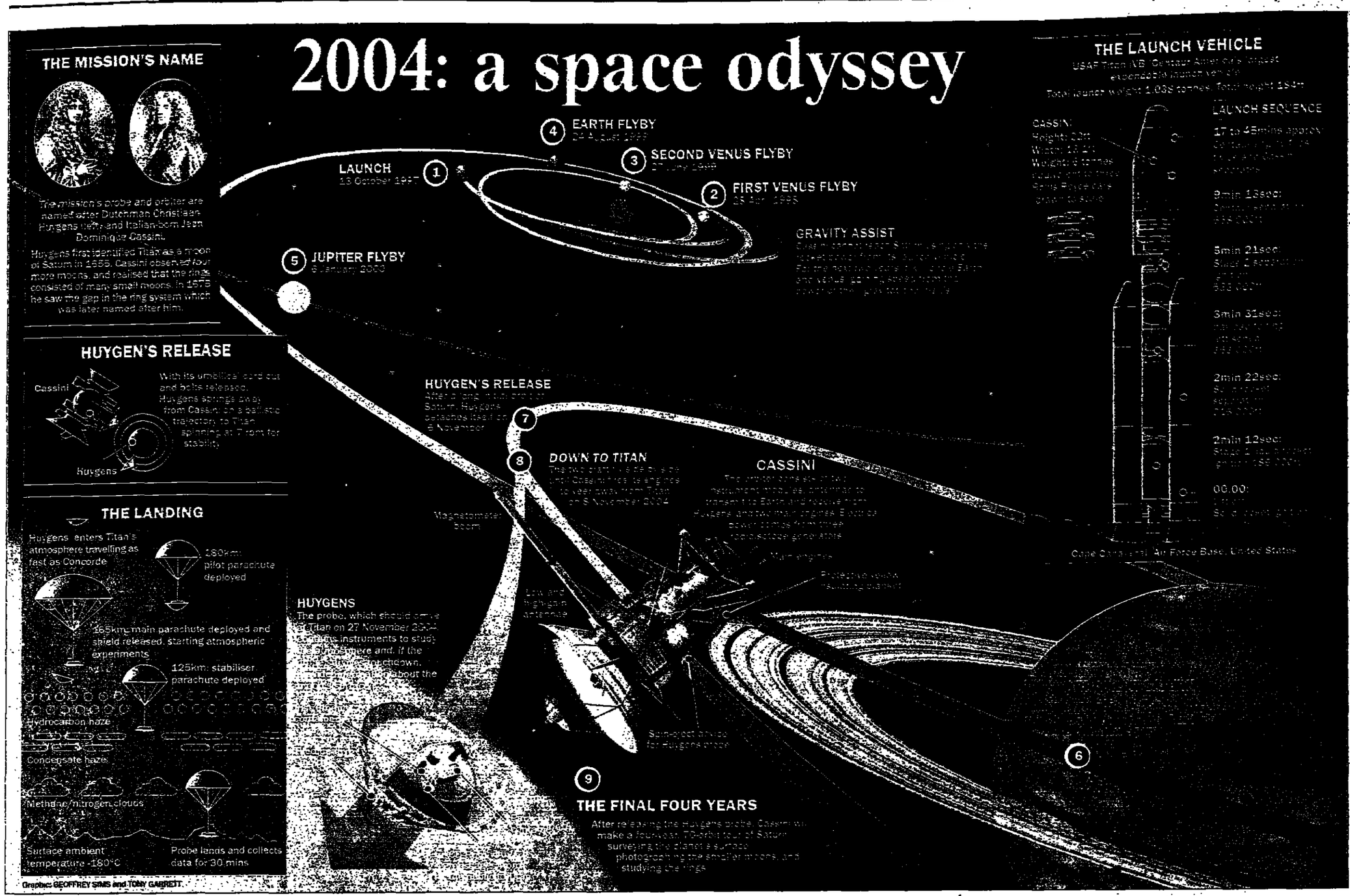
2004: a space odyssey



Graphic: GEOFFREY SIMS and TONY GARRETT

IT IS being billed as the last great space mission of the 20th century (Nick Nuttall, technology correspondent, writes). On Monday the Cassini Huygens mission will blast off from Cape Canaveral on a two-billion-mile voyage to Saturn and its giant moon, Titan.

The £1 billion mission, a joint European and American venture, aims to gather more knowledge on the ringed planet and unravel the mysteries of Titan, which is shrouded in foggy clouds. Its surface and atmosphere have intrigued scientists for years: they believe the moon resembles a deep-frozen Earth of 4.5 billion years ago, before life evolved. The Huygens probe, with instruments from the University of Kent, the Rutherford Appleton Laboratory and the University of Manchester's Institute of Science and Technology, will parachute through the atmosphere, hitting the surface after 135 minutes. The probe may then operate for up to an hour, beaming information to the Cassini craft. The probe has a force sensor beneath, which, it is hoped, will beam back whether the surface is sandy or gravelly, or sticky from organic compounds. Ralph Lorenz, a European Space Agency engineer, said: "If the probe lands in a hydrocarbon sea, it will float, and accelerometers will measure wave heights. A small sonar will measure the depth of the sea."

Some clues to the moon's environment have come from *Voyager* missions of the early 1980s, and more recently from ground-based radar, the Hubble space telescope and more powerful optical telescopes. These indicate that some of the complex organic chemicals which may have led to the evolution of life on Earth are on Titan. They include hydrogen cyanide, a building block of life. Its air, like Earth's, is made up mainly of nitrogen. But, unlike Earth, it also contains methane.

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Son goes free after helping mother to die

Man was faced with stark choice after witnessing years of agony, reports Simon de Bruxelles

A FARM worker who held a shotgun to his crippled mother's head while she pulled the trigger walked free from court yesterday.

Janet Pitman, 75, had repeatedly begged her son, Peter, to help her out of her misery after suffering years of agony from rheumatoid arthritis. On an early summer's evening in May the pair hugged farewell in a field 200 yards from the home they shared in the village of Charlton Mackrell, near Yeovil, Somerset. Moments later, Mrs Pitman was dead.

A judge showed mercy, giving Peter Pitman a nine-month prison sentence suspended for two years. Pitman, 46, who called the police straight after the shooting, was originally charged with murder. But when the details emerged, the Crown Prosecution Service reduced it to aiding and abetting suicide.

Michael Brabin, for the defence, told Bristol Crown Court: "The night before she died she screamed in agony every half-hour. She was determined to take her life the next day and asked Mr Pitman to lend her his gun. He and his mother hugged each other for a long time. She got him to hold the gun for her and she pressed back the trigger."

Mr Brabin said Pitman had previously stopped his widowed mother from sitting on a railway track near their home. She had threatened to do it again if he did not help her to kill herself.

Mr Brabin said: "She was a strong-minded woman who was determined on this occasion to take her life. Mr Pitman had a difficult decision to make. He knew what he was doing was against the law.

"It was a matter of honour which forced him to go through this macabre ritual. He said to me, 'For my mother to have gone down to the railway track and to have been found from here to Crewkerne would have been a disgrace.'"

He added: "He had lived with his mother all his life and looked after her. She was the dominant one in the house and she was obsessed with her illness. Mrs Pitman had made it abundantly clear that she had intended to take her life."

Since the killing Mr Pitman had received the backing of his family and villagers. Judge John Foley told him: "I accept you were left with a stark choice. I am told your mother was screaming in agony the night before her death and I am satisfed there is no risk of you re-offending.

"In the circumstances there has to be a custodial sentence, but, due to the exceptional circumstances, in my opinion it is appropriate to suspend it for two years."

After the hearing Mr Brabin said his client was too upset to talk. He said: "Mr Pitman is relieved. He has been under a terrific amount of strain over the last few months."

Lily Shakespeare, owner of the village store in Charlton Mackrell, said: "I am very pleased for him. His mother used to come into the shop regularly. She was very fed up with the quality of her life. When I first heard of her death, it was a terrible shock, but I am happy he's gone free. I'm sure he only had his mother's best interests at heart."

Matter of honour: Peter Pitman and his mother, Janet

French start mass DNA tests to find girl's killer

FROM SUSAN BELL IN PARIS

THE Breton village of Pleine Fougères witnessed France's largest mass DNA testing yesterday in an effort to catch the killer of Caroline Dickinson, the British girl who was raped and murdered while staying in the local youth hostel on a school trip in July last year.

The tests were carried out at the town hall under the supervision of Renaud Van Ruymbeke, the judge who took over the murder investigation in August after appeals from Caroline's parents that the former investigating magistrate in charge of the case, Gérard Zaug, be removed. He had refused to carry out mass DNA testing.

The 170 men of the village aged 15 to 35 were invited to attend the testing sessions which began yesterday and will continue until Sunday night. Under French law, people cannot be forced to submit to DNA testing and investigators emphasised yesterday that pressure would not be put on those who did not volunteer.

The testing was carried out in an atmosphere of good humour with many in the community anxious to see the pall of suspicion that has been hanging over them lifted.

Not everyone, however, is in favour. The village awoke yesterday to find that the walls of the town hall had been daubed with the words "No to the 'liberticide' tests. Boycott." Members of the Anarchist Federation claimed responsibility.

If the DNA tests are inconclusive, more tests in November will target men aged 35 to 55 in the village. Police say the killer of the 13-year-old knew the area and the hostel, making it likely he was local.

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BRYN COLTON

Luca Cumani surveys the burnt-out loft of his stables after the second fire in as many days early yesterday

Top stables hit by mystery fires

BY LIN JENKINS AND JOHN SHAW

ONE of the country's leading flat racing trainers, Luca Cumani, has suffered two mystery arson attacks at his stables in Newmarket within 24 hours.

The 48-year-old trainer, his wife Sarah and three neighbouring trainers coaxed frightened horses out of their stables to safety as flames ripped through the loft early yesterday. The alarm was raised by a neighbour who had heard a man running down the lane shouting for help.

The first fire, which broke out around 9am on Thursday, had destroyed the roof of a stable yard adjacent to Bedford House. Mr Cumani, who trained the jockey Frankie Dettori, a fellow Italian, and counts the Aga Khan amongst his owners, said: "I just couldn't believe it. Sarah and I brought the first three horses out from boxes under the loft that was burning. They were a bit frightened but perfectly all right. Then my head lad Jimmy Thompson and his wife arrived and we got another four out.

"Neighbouring trainers Sean Woods, Willie Jarvis and Willie Haggas, Lester Piggott's father-in-law, appeared on the scene and lent a hand. The fire brigade arrived and brought it under control."

Mr Cumani said he was saddened by the fires and had feared for both his staff and the 120 horses in his care. "Nobody panicked, the horses were frightened but none of them did anything silly. We have put the horses in empty boxes and proceeded to train as normal," he said. "We have a runner today and runners tomorrow and life is getting back as usual. Fire is not to be trifled with and the potential was very great but we are glad there have been no injuries."

The incident follows two fires within a week last month at the yard of the trainer Howard Johnson in Crook, Durham.

Mr Cumani's yard has been in top form this season. In the past 14 days from 23 runners, he has had seven winners and eight horses placed. This year he has won £953,000 prize money and had 59 winners — a strike rate of 21 percent.

A 28-year-old man has been arrested in connection with the blazes.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

Colonel Bob on Bosnia and love under fire

"After keeping his emotions under wraps for three years while the dust settled on his controversial command in Bosnia, Colonel Bob Stewart reveals what he wouldn't put on record in the past: the anecdotes, the anger — and the agony of falling in love under fire, far away from his wife and children . . ."

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Inishvickillane could fetch up to £2 million. Mr Haughey bought it in 1974 for £25,000 and spends eight weeks a year on the island, which forms part of the remote Blasket Islands, below, off the Kerry coast

Haughey sells island to pay off his debts

By Audrey Magee, Ireland Correspondent

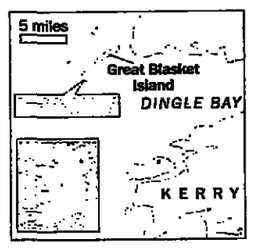
CHARLES HAUGHEY, the disgraced former Irish Prime Minister, is selling his private island to pay substantial tax and legal bills incurred by a tribunal investigating his secret £1.3 million gift from a supermarket tycoon.

Mr Haughey is putting his most prized asset on the market to meet the massive bills he faces at the end of this month when the tribunal is expected to award costs against him.

He already faces a £1 million bill for non-payment of tax on the £1.3 million he received from Ben Dunne, the former chairman of Dunnes Stores retail chain. But even more financially crippling is the bill, likely to run into millions of pounds, for his failure to co-operate with the tribunal. The sale of Inishvickillane, 11 miles off the Kerry coast, for between £1 million and £2 million will go some way towards meeting those costs.

The former Fianna Fail Prime Minister bought the island in 1974 for about £25,000. It forms part of the Blasket Islands and was once home to a community of monks, who left stone relics on the island.

According to a regular visitor to the island, Inishvickillane has a stone-clad three-bedroom house, a run-down cottage and a ruined church. It has a helicopter landing area, a sheltered cove for Mr Haughey's 50ft ketch, a small jetty for dinghies and its own electrical generator. For most of the year, it is accessible only by helicopter.

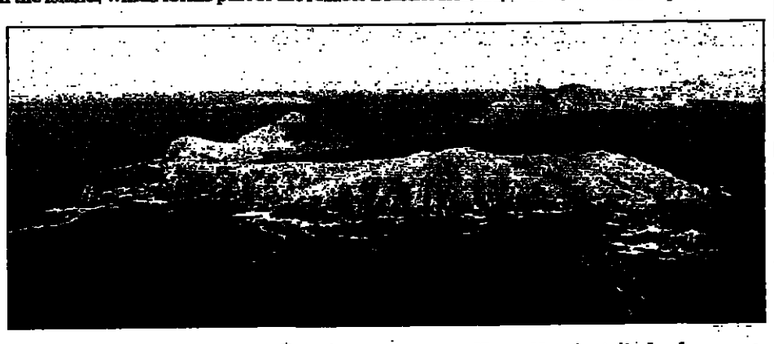


The island has two dozen red deer. Mr Haughey also began a breeding programme to raise the numbers of the rare sea eagle in Ireland. He has preserved the bleak nature of the island, although he has erected a handrail to assist people climbing from the jetty to the house.

Political sources said that the island, one mile long by half a mile wide, was being placed on the international market in the hope of attracting buyers from Germany and the United States.

Mr Haughey is being forced to relinquish the island against his wishes. He spends about eight weeks a year there on his own or with family and close friends. François Mitterrand, the late French President, was among the visitors.

One source said Mr Haughey recently described himself as living through "miserable times". Last week, he laid off five employees on his north Dublin estate to curb costs. Judge McCracken, who chaired the tribunal that sat for 19 days earlier this year in Dublin Castle, is expected to demand later this month that Mr Haughey pay a large part of the fees incurred for the investigation into Mr Dunne's payments to politicians.



The costs of the tribunal have not yet been set, but legal sources involved in the case suggest that it will run into several million pounds, some of which will have to be met by Mr Haughey.

Mr Haughey, unlike all the other participants in the tribunal, is unlikely to have his costs met by the state, because of his failure to co-operate. The tribunal incurred massive additional costs, including a trip to the Cayman Islands to examine off-shore accounts, and two days' hearing in London because of Mr Haughey's repeated denials of receiving £1.3 million from Mr Dunne between 1987 and 1991.

However, the tribunal uncovered such strong evidence against Mr Haughey that he was forced in July to admit the donation. He tried to absolve himself of any responsibilty for the money by blaming his former accountant. But in a damning indictment, Judge McCracken criticised Mr Haughey's lack of co-operation and dismissed his evidence to the tribunal as "quite incredible".

A second tribunal has been set up by the Government to establish if any further illegal or secretive payments were made to Mr Haughey.

The former Prime Minister, a man of humble origins, denies that his mansion, private island, racehorses and ketch are indicative of a lavish life. He told the tribunal that his busy work schedule left no room for "an extravagant lifestyle". Journalists who asked him about his wealth were told: "Ask my bank manager."

NEWS IN BRIEF

A decade on the run in the sun

An escaped prisoner has been brought back to Britain after spending 11 years in Florida. Michael Jackson, 46, had been serving an 18-month sentence for conspiracy to smuggle Krugerrands into Britain when he escaped from Rudgate prison, near Leeds, in 1986.

He was taken yesterday to a police station at Newcastle upon Tyne for questioning. Jackson, originally from Birtley, near Gateshead, had been living under a false name in Orlando until a tip-off this summer. Northumbria Police arranged his deportation.

Portrait restored

The portrait of Myra Hindley, damaged three weeks ago when a protester splattered it with ink, has gone back on display at the Royal Academy. The painting has been put behind Perspex to protect it from further attacks.

Scout tents safe

Fears that scouts' tents, bought from the Ministry of Defence in 1993, may have been contaminated with chemicals suspected of causing Gulf War syndrome are unfounded, the Armed Forces Minister John Reid said.

Four charged

Four teenagers have been remanded in custody for a week by magistrates in Richmond, southwest London, charged with attacking Daniel Moore, 12, a policeman's son. Daniel is still being treated for head injuries.

Yachts damaged

Coastguards have been checking for casualties after a boat collided with a line of moored yachts, sinking one and damaging another. The vessels on the River Orwell near Ipswich were hit by a coaster with six people on board.

DJ browned off

Simon Mayo's Radio 1 show was forced off the air yesterday after smoke from burning toast three floors above the London studios forced the building to be evacuated. Taped music filled the gap until Mayo returned.

HMV

pixies
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DEATH TO THE PIXIES

"The finest, offbeat rocker American rock band of the last decade" (★★★★★ The Guardian) release their long overdue collection of "pure electric glitz" (Melody Maker) on 6th October. Pixies were "a blueprint for Nirvana and Grunge" (Guardian Guide) and so, unchallenged, set the "epicentre of indie music as we know it" (Select).

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'Townies' blamed for threat to fair

By Simon de Bruxelles

EVERY summer for 650 years, Priddy Fair has gone ahead regardless of war or pestilence. Now one of Britain's oldest country fairs is said to be facing a new threat: townies.

Each August, the village of 400 people high in the Mendips plays host to thousands of visitors for a day. But many of the newer residents are said to be unhappy at the annual invasion of gypsies and travellers with bareback races, claiming it disrupts their newly-acquired rural bliss. A postal ballot is now to be held giving residents the choice of stopping the fair, reducing its size or allowing it to carry on unchanged.

Clarice Maine, 71, one of 12 "shareholders" who run the fair, said: "There are more new people here than Priddy people and that is causing the problem. The fair is an important part of village life."

The parish council clerk, Judith Peacock, said: "It is the same as when people come to a village and complain about the cows mooing." But one relatively recent arrival, who asked not be named, said: "It can be intimidating when there are so many strangers around."

Nation votes from the heart

By Carol Midgley, Media Correspondent

HOW Do I Love Thee? — the simple sonnet written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning for her husband — has been voted the public's favourite love poem in a poll conducted by the BBC.

Barrett Browning, who defied her father to elope with Robert Browning in 1846, was the clear winner from the shortlist, which included Shakespeare, W.B. Yeats, Ted Hughes and Robert Burns. The survey was carried out to mark National Poetry Day.

Stop All the Clocks (Song 9), the oration by W.H. Auden which was popularised in the funeral scene of the film *Four Weddings and a Funeral*, emerged as the nation's third favourite love poem.

Barrett Browning's poem is sonnet 43 from *Sonnets from the Portuguese* which appeared in her *Poems* published in 1850.

A spokesman for the BBC's education department said surprisingly few pop song lyrics were voted for, and only Leonard Cohen, Bob Geldof and Marc Almond registered in the survey. The two best-known living poets in the top 30 were Adrian Henri and Adrian Mitchell.

Last year's BBC poll to find the nation's favourite postwar poem was won by Jenny Joseph's *Warning*. The previous year's poll for the most popular poem of all time was Rudyard Kipling's *If*.

☐ The Top 20: 1. *How Do I Love Thee?*, Elizabeth Barrett Browning; 2. *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven*, W.B. Yeats; 3. *Stop All the Clocks* (Song 9), W.H. Auden; 4. *A Red, Red Rose*, Robert Burns; 5. *Let Me Not to the Marriage of True Minds* (Sonnet 116), Shakespeare; 6. *To his Coy Mistress*, Andrew Marvell; 7. *Shall I Compare Thee to a Summer's Day?* (Sonnet 18), Shakespeare; 8. *Remember*, Christina Rossetti; 9. *Renouncement*, Alice Meynell; 10. *When You are Old and Full of Sleep*, W.B. Yeats; 11. *The Good Morrow*, John Donne; 12. *A Subaltern's Love Song*, Sir John Betjeman; 13. *A Fond Kiss*, Robert Burns; 14. *Jenny Kissed Me*, Leigh Hunt; 15. *Love's Philosophy*, Percy Shelley; 16. *The Sun Rising*, John Donne; 17. *Code Poem for the French Resistance*, Leo Marks; 18. *A Birthday*, Christina Rossetti; 19. *The Passionate Shepherd to his Love*, Christopher Marlowe; 20. *The Confirmation*, Edwin Muir.

How Do I Love Thee?

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.
I love thee to the depth and breadth and height
My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight
For the ends of Being and ideal Grace.
I love thee to the level of everyday's
Most quiet need, by sun and candlelight.
I love thee freely, as men strive for right;
I love thee purely, as they turn from Praise.
I love thee with the passion put to use
In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.
I love thee with a love I seemed to lose
With my lost saints. — I love thee with the breath,
Smiles, tears, of all my life! — and, if God choose,
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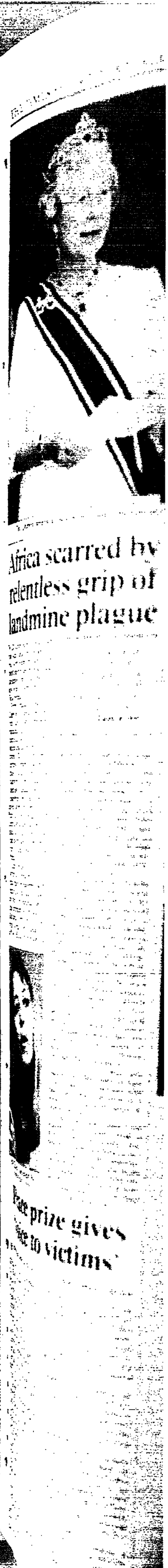

SAEED KHAN / EPA

The Queen wears a tiara with a huge emerald set off by a matching necklace at the presidential banquet

Jewels of the Crown dazzle Pakistan elite

In a nation where gold is a badge of wealth, the Queen has made heads turn, **Christopher Thomas** writes

THE Queen dazzled Pakistan this week with her jewels, some of which she rarely wears. In a country where gold about the neck, wrists and ankles is a calculated boast of wealth — and must never be less than 22 carat — her expensive adornments left a lasting impression.

In India too, wealthy women drape gold about themselves, some of it big and vulgar but nevertheless a badge of high position in society. To carry 20 years of a labouring man's wages about the neck in one chunk of ornate gold is not deemed tacky by the elite in either India or Pakistan, two of the world's poorest nations. It is merely a statement of rank.

At the state banquet given by President Leghari, one of Pakistan's richest feudal landlords, the Queen wore a diamond tiara with a huge emerald, set off by a matching necklace. She was more dazzling than the crystal chandeliers that dangle over the vast halls of the Presidential Palace, and not a woman in the place could have failed to cast an appraising eye upon her jewels. She also wore the sash of the Nishan-e-Pakistan (Order of Pakistan), the highest civilian award, which the President had given her.

The Queen has perhaps a dozen tiaras, some inherited, some received as gifts. One of the Royal Family's least popular is known as the Family Tiara, usually worn by young royals when they come of age and do not have a tiara of their own. Princess Margaret used it before buying her own from Christie's. The Queen has always valued the impact of her tiaras, which enable her to outshine even the most jewel-draped filmstar.

Her jewellery, like her many trunks of other possessions flown out from London, was hauled around Pakistan this week guarded by the Army — a more honest and reliable institution than the police. Airport officials stared in wonder at all the boxes. "This is all for just one week?" one asked, and whistled.

At a dinner in Lahore Fort given by Nawaz Sharif, the Prime Minister, the Queen wore a brooch containing a large round sapphire surrounded by diamonds. This is one of the finest pieces in her collection. It was owned by the Tsarina Marie Fyodorovna, sister of Queen Alexandra, wife of Edward VII. The Tsarina, mother of Nicholas II, the last Tsar, passed this and other valuables to her daughter. But the brooch made its way to Queen Mary after the Tsarina's death. Queen Elizabeth wore it during her visit to Russia in 1994.

Wealthy women in India, perhaps even more fond of adorning themselves in gold than Pakistani women, will check to see if the Queen treats local high society to a spectacle as splendid as the one she gave across the border.

Lahore children sing greeting

Lahore: Singing children greeted the Queen with rose petals when she visited their school in the Pakistani city of Lahore yesterday. She arrived at Christ Church primary school in the same Rolls-Royce she used when she last visited Pakistan in 1961.

Two mentally handicapped boys held up hand-lettered paper signs which read "God bless Pakistan" and "God bless the Queen". The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh will rest for the weekend in the former hill station of Murree, near Islamabad, where they will attend church tomorrow. They arrive in Delhi later tomorrow for a week-long state visit to India.

Africa scarred by relentless grip of landmine plague

The Nobel prize for landmine campaigners is a small step towards making an entire continent safe, writes **Sam Kiley**

WAR leaves many scars, both physical and psychological, but with patience and care most people can recover. But landmines rob survivors of any hope of leaving the battlefield behind.

From Somalia to Angola to Zaire and Rwanda, the "perfect soldiers" have been sown randomly across a war-torn continent and will continue to maim and kill for decades to come. They will reinforce terrible dreams, haunting those who have suffered. The banning of the production and use of landmines in most countries this year, recognised with the Nobel Peace Prize for the International Campaign to Ban Landmines, and Jody Williams, its American co-ordinator, will go some way towards ending the threat.

Like anyone who has witnessed a conflict, I have had many encounters with mines and will join millions of people in congratulating the campaign on its award. But until mines are removed from Africa's grasslands it will be difficult for millions of people to rebuild their countries with any confidence.

Until one has seen the damage that they do and their entirely random targets, it is difficult to understand fully the deep terror that their sowing causes. I have been lost at night on remote roads in Somalia and simply prayed that I would survive a 30 mile journey past trucks, buses, cars and bicycles shattered by landmine explosions.

In Cuito, central Angola, mines outnumber maize plants. On a day trip to the city I noted an anti-personnel mine explosion every 45 minutes. Unexploded mortar bombs, stuck in the tarmac with their fins pointing at the sky, seemed like benign friends compared to mines. Seven months later, swinging round a corner on a dirt track in Rwanda, I nearly rammed two trucks from the Rwandan Patriotic Front which had been destroyed by anti-tank mines. The vehicle in front of me pulled forward just two yards and was blown to pieces, its driver thrown through the windshield.

My party was then ambushed, but the clatter of light arms could not compare with the shattering explosion of a mine designed to rip apart 60 tonnes of steel.

Wherever I am, I step from concrete on to grass with a sharp intake of breath. But this irrelevant neurosis is but a tiny part of the absolute terror which infects the heart of almost every Angolan farmer, every peasant in eastern Congo and every nomad in the Horn of Africa.

Williams: awarded the Nobel Peace Prize

Peace prize gives 'voice to victims'

BY PETER CAPELLA IN GENEVA AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

THE International Campaign to Ban Landmines yesterday welcomed the award of the Nobel Peace Prize as giving new strength to the voice of smaller countries, victims of a daily "silent massacre".

The prize announcement was widely welcomed, particularly in countries suffering a legacy of landmines from internal wars. Brandishing the artificial limb of a seven-year-old Cambodian girl, Suzan Walker, a leading member of the Campaign, vowed to keep up the pressure to get more countries to join a ban on anti-personnel landmines in Ottawa in December.

"The Nobel Peace Prize will help us to convince recalcitrant nations like the United States, China, Russia, India, Pakistan, Iran, Iraq: Stand on notice, you are on the wrong side of humanity if you do not sign," Mrs Walker said.

Campaigners say 70 people are killed or maimed by landmine explosions every day. More than 100 countries are ready to support a ban. Mrs Walker also paid tribute to Diana, Princess of Wales, for raising public awareness, of the humanitarian problem of landmines: "What the victims are suffering, she brought that to the attention of the world public."

Mine-clearing experts in Afghanistan, one of the world's most heavily mined countries, said yesterday that they were thrilled. The award was also applauded by Angolan landmine victims.

Alexander Ivanko, spokesman for the United Nations in Bosnia, said he said he hoped the prize would lead to an increase in funding to clear mines. Bajazit Suta, co-ordinator for demining the former frontline suburb of Dobrinja next to the Sarajevo airport praised the award.

Handicap International, a body which works to rehabilitate victims of anti-personnel landmines, hailed the award as a turning-point in the drive to abolish the weapons.

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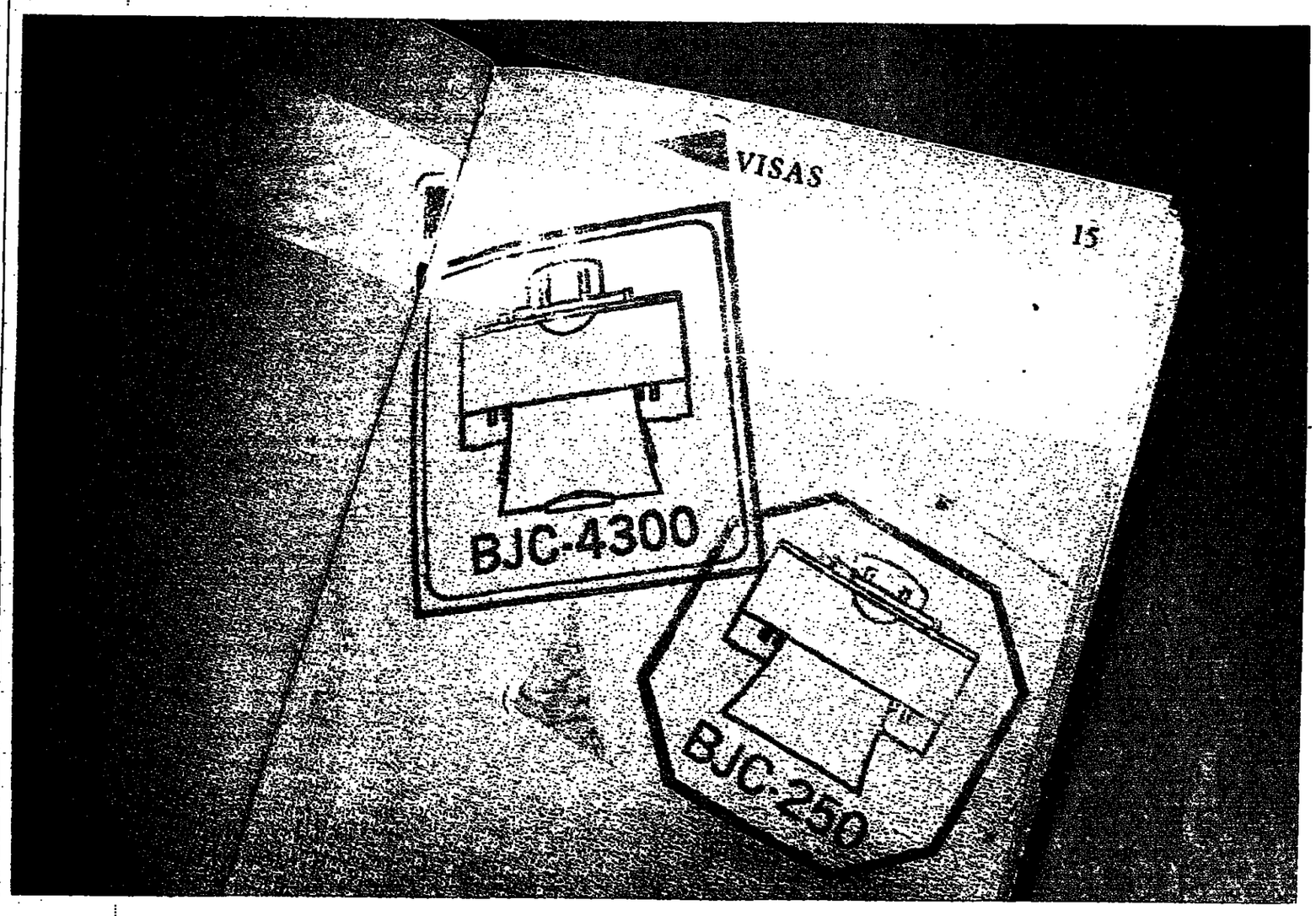

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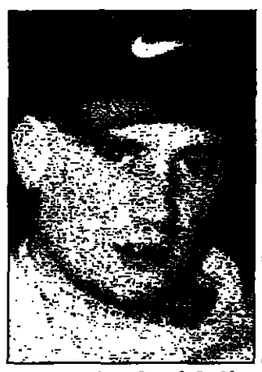
JIM DUNBURY/REX FEATURES

Dancers at the Hacienda before it shut: gangs of youths drunk or high on drugs who force their way into one club after another have made violence an everyday event

Clubland acts to curb violence

Manchester's vibrant nightlife has been marred by a spate of random murders, reports **Russell Jenkins**



Steven Hughes, left; Simon Speakman, centre, and Sam Parle: killed near clubs

MANCHESTER'S clubland, once the capital of Britain's youth culture, yesterday launched a fightback against violence that reached a bloody climax with the murders of two clubbers last weekend.

The city's clubs stopped the music to stage a minute's silence at midnight last night. Earlier city councillors had met senior police officers and club owners to discuss the crisis.

The talks were triggered by the double murder last Saturday night when Simon Speakman, 27, from Macclesfield, Cheshire, was kicked to death outside the Spice Café after he stepped in to help a girl involved in an argument over a bag of chips.

Twenty minutes later, 400 yards away, Steven Hughes, 22, from Chorlton cum Hardy, was stabbed to death after going to help a girl who was pushed to the ground in a row over cigarettes.

Manchester's city fathers are so alarmed that they met pub and club owners and senior police officers at Manchester Town hall yesterday afternoon to draw up a strategy to counter the violence. In the past six months at least two others have died after incidents outside clubs. Sam Parle, 22, of Stretford, Greater Manchester, died after a fight outside the Fifth Avenue nightclub. A man has been charged with manslaughter.

Last night as the minute's silence was observed, Patrick Karney, chairman of the council's city centre committee, asked clubbers to use the time to reflect on what kind of city they want.

Manchester's clubs once lured teenagers from all over the country. But the Hacienda, the club that began it all, has closed under the hostile attention of the police, and the club scene has soured. Clubbers, 150,000 of whom head into Manchester each weekend to its 115 clubs, complain that an atmosphere of fear and intimidation envelops the city centre.

There has been concern that organised crime has infiltrated the employment of doormen. Gangs of thuggish youths, drunk or high on drugs, roam from one club to another, forcing their way in and making violence an everyday event.

Gary Marto, promoter of the city's premier Friday night 2Kinky at Holy City Zoo, has complained of yobs getting through the net. They are identified, he says, by a "uniform" of long winter overcoats in the 90F heat of the dancefloor.

He told *City Life Magazine* last week: "It wasn't a lack of ideas that brought the demise of the Hacienda and other clubs in that genre, it was actually the effect that the gangs have on nightclubs in Manchester."

Dave Haslam, DJ at Yellow (The Boardwalk), told the same listings magazine: "Society's problems have become clubland's problems in the same way as football has been marred in the past."

Both men were attending the meeting at the town hall yesterday. They heard Mr Karney plead with the police for more officers on the beat at nights in the city centre. He has asked for the closed-circuit television cameras to be linked to Bootle Street police station where officers can be sent out as soon as trouble begins to brew.

Mr Karney is asking Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, for greater powers to combat the menace and more CCTV cameras. He wants the power to ban convicted thugs from the city centre for life.

He told BBC Radio 4's *Today*: "A minority of young male adults have to examine their macho tribal behaviour because this is where these incidents come from. This is Manchester, not America, and we are going to sort this out."

Two men, in separate cases, have been charged with the murders of Mr Speakman and Mr Hughes. They have been remanded in custody.

MoD dismisses a private Britannia

BY MICHAEL EVANS, DEFENCE CORRESPONDENT

PRIVATE-sector plans to build a new Royal Yacht were dismissed as impractical by the Ministry of Defence yesterday, as the Government's decision not to replace *Britannia* came under attack.

After yesterday's announcement by George Robertson, the Defence Secretary, a senior MoD official said of the private consortiums' proposals: "They effectively said we will build a cruise ship, you can use it for a few days a year and we'll call it a Royal Yacht."

Running costs would amount to £5 million to £10 million a year, and the Government felt it was inappropriate to spend "substantial" public funds. British firms used *Britannia* on 60 days between 1990 and 1996.

A Buckingham Palace spokeswoman said the Queen considered the decision not to replace or refurbish *Britannia* to be "understandable and appropriate". The ship's final location is to be decided before decommissioning on December 11 in Portsmouth.

Lord Hurd of Westwell said he had seen at firsthand the "amazing impact" *Britannia* had abroad and the benefits it brought for business, adding: "This is a mean and short-sighted decision."

☐ The cruise liner *Canberra* leaves Southampton tonight to end her life in a scrapyard in Pakistan, P&O Cruises announced.

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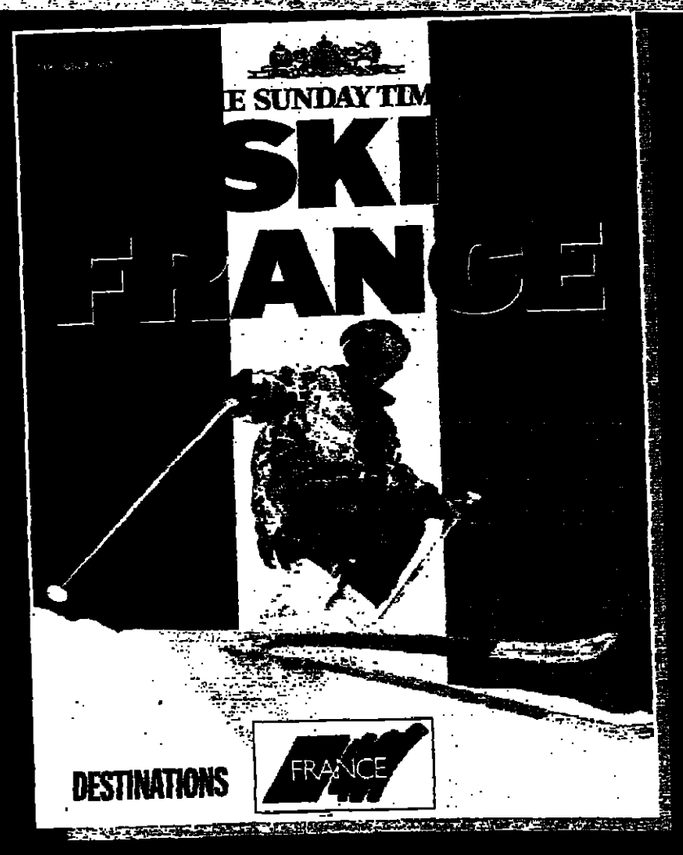

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Hague the apologist clears party's decks

By Philip Webster, Political Editor

WILLIAM HAGUE'S apology to the country yesterday for the Conservative Government taking it into the exchange-rate mechanism was the culmination of a clearing-the-decks exercise in which former ministers have constantly preached the message that they made mistakes and must learn from them.

"We had to slay the dragons. Talking about the ERM in this way was the most dramatic way of doing it and you could hear the relief in the audience when he said it," a Tory strategist said. "This will help us to move on."

Relaxed and assured, Mr Hague delivered an hour-long speech that combined a lengthy statement of his personal credo with a withering attack on the "deeply unattractive cynicism" of Tony Blair's Government.

He told them that while Labour's "politics without conscience" had initially prompted fascination, then admiration, it would ultimately breed contempt.

After a week that has gone better for the Conservatives and Mr Hague than they could have anticipated, he declared that they had achieved a new unity of purpose and conviction that would help them to rebuild the party and make it fit to return to govern at the next general election. He told them to "sharpen your swords" for the fight ahead, helped by a reform process that would "transform the world's oldest and most successful political party into a modern fighting force equipped for the battles of the 21st century."

Mr Hague declared: "Never again will we have a divided organisation. Never again will the voice of our members go unheard and never again will we allow the good name of our party to be blackened by the greed and selfishness of a few."

The other central aim was to introduce Mr Hague to the wider public. His low poll rating is attributed by the Tories to the fact that for many people he remains unknown.

So his speech was peppered with personal references to his upbringing, how he went to a comprehensive school in Rotherham, how his father ran a small soft drinks company.

He then gave them his own vision of Conservatism - combining his support for the traditonal Tory values of freedom, enterprise, education and self reliance and the nation with a strong emphasis on compassion, tolerance and obligation to others.

His democratic, popular Conservatism would listen with "compassion at its core". It would be rooted in tradition but embrace the future.

It would be "a changing Conservatism that acknowledges its mistakes".

It was clear that his audience had yet to come to terms with his effort to transform the Tory image through giving it a caring heart. His statements that compassion was not a bolt-on extra to Conservativism and that Britain could become the most compassionate society in the world were politely received.

It was a similar reaction when he hit out again at Lord Tebbit for his attack on multiculturalism. He said he was proud to be British "and so do hundreds of thousands of British blacks and British Asians. I want to see men and women from our ethnic minorities playing their full part in the mainstream of our national life."

But they were much more at home with his attacks on Labour and his Euroscepticism. He was trying to contrast his own beliefs and values, rooted in Tory traditions, with Labour's alleged lack of principles. "New Labour: they're for everything but nothing."

On any issue at any time, Mr Blair was happy to say one thing and then do another. "That's why we'll oppose them as new Labour. And that's why we'll beat them as new Labour."

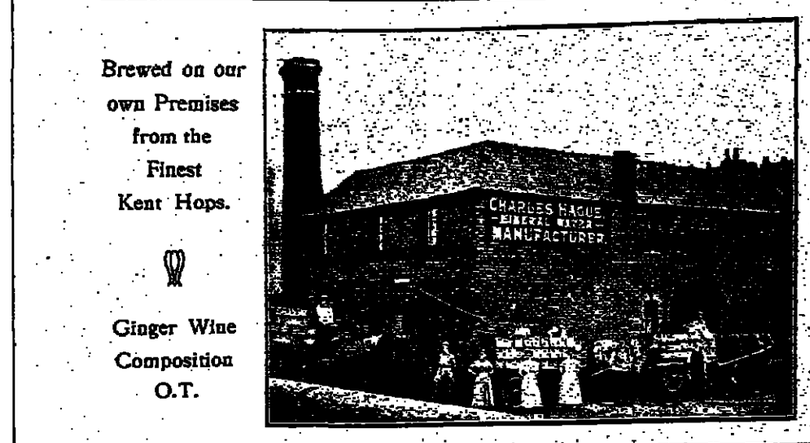
Watching Labour in Government had made clear: "They don't believe in anything except their own political success". Mr Hague declared: "Labour have lost their moral compass. They care most of all about what sounds good, what trips off the tongue, what plays well on the television bulletins and what gets a headline in tomorrow's papers."

Labour had introduced "a new and deeply unattractive cynicism into British politics: a new cynicism that says it doesn't matter whether a policy is right or wrong, but only whether it can be sold to the British people," he said.

He pleased them with his affirmation of his belief in the United Kingdom and in a Europe of nation states. "There is a limit to European integration and ... we are near that limit now." And they seemed happier with his support for the traditional family.

Light thrown on council work bill

William Hague was accused last night of being "ill-informed" after claiming that a Labour-run council charged a children's home £514 to change 17 lightbulbs. John Fletcher, the leader of Coventry City Council, said: "Had he checked his facts he would know that the bill had been wrongly calculated, and that a bill for the correct amount has already been sent."



A poster showing the premises of the Hague family's soft-drinks business at Park Gate in Rotheram

William and the fizzy pop factory

By Paul Wilkinson

THE young William Hague learnt about commerce by watching over his father's shoulder as he ran the family business, distributing wine and the company's own-brand fizzy drinks.

Nigel Hague's business provided a comfortable, but not luxurious, lifestyle for the family in Greaseborough, deep in the coal and steel heartland of socialist south Yorkshire. As a teenager, William earned useful cash working with the delivery lorries on runs from the company works at Park Gate in nearby Rotherham.

His mother, Stella, the daughter of a local farmer, said: "I think going out like that on the lorries, meeting people, helped him get on. That and going to a comprehensive, where all sorts go, gave him the common touch. He can get on with anybody. He loves people."

It was clear, however, that he was going to pursue a career elsewhere so the family sold Charles Hague and Co in 1989. "It would have been there for him if he had wanted it, but he was not interested," Mrs Hague said.

Her husband, now 69, was the third generation of the Hagues to run the family company. Hague's Pop Factory, as it was known locally, was started in 1870 by William's great-grandfather Charles. It produced traditional drinks, such as lemonade and cherryade, which were sold to local shops and pubs. It also did home deliveries and locals still recall the lorries bringing crates of pop.

In its later years the business moved into wine wholesaling. The Hagues were also part-owners of five pubs.

They sold the firm, which had 32 staff, to a subsidiary of Boddingtons brewery in Manchester and soft-drinks production ceased soon afterwards. Today the works is owned by Greenall.

The leader is willing, but his troops are still too weak

RIDDELL ON POLITICS

WILLIAM HAGUE has established himself as Conservative leader this week, but the party itself remains in a stunned and confused state. The Shadow Cabinet is restless and too many of its members have not yet adjusted to loss of office. Convalescence is just beginning: recovery is some way off.

The standing of Mr Hague was artifically low before the conference, partly as a result of his own misjudgements. But the endorsement process by party members, however flawed, at least provided decisive backing for him and his reform plan, even though there will be many arguments ahead over implementation.

Mr Hague is also the best conference orator to be Tory leader for a long time, more fluent than either Margaret Thatcher or John Major, as he showed both on Tuesday and again yesterday. Many people, in the party as well as among the public generally, have not known what to make of him. He has now begun to fill out his identity by talking about his personal experiences and what he has learnt of freedom and enterprise from growing up in south Yorkshire. There is the beginnings of an appealing Hague story to be told, and to be sold to the voters.

The Hague strategy has also become clearer. This week, we have heard contrition, humility (often somewhat strained from former Cabinet ministers) and even, yesterday, an outright apology for Britain's entry into the European exchange rate mechanism ("a great mistake"). If the past has not yet been forgiven or forgotten, the Major era is now definitely over.

The most controversial, and unexpected, feature was the new, caring face of Conservatism. This is both necessary, to appeal to a younger generation and risky, as shown by the hostile reaction yesterday of the moral arbiters of the committed Tory press to Michael Portillo's lecture.

Mr Hague himself yesterday both effectively countered Lord Tebbit's assault on multiculturalism and carefully balanced, 'the enduring values' of traditional family life' and 'understanding and tolerance of people making their own decisions about how they lead their lives". Compassion, he said, is 'not a bolt-on extra to Conservatism. It's at its very core." Society is back on the Tory agenda, even if these remarks were more coolly received by the Tory faithful than the breast-beating over the exchange-rate mechanism or the attacks on Labour.

However, it is hard to know what to make of his comment about a 'democratic, popular Conservatism that listens, that has compassion at its core'. It is perilously close to the soundbite vacuities of "new" Labour that Mr Hague was himself criticising earlier in the speech.

Mr Hague, we are told admiringly by his advisers, will surprise us all by his boldness. There was little sign of that yesterday. There was much about the continued relevance of Conservative principles but little sense of where the party might be going.

What are the new challenges it expects to face? What role is there for the state? What do his references to self-reliance and community responsibilities really mean? Policymaking can wait, but this is the debate that Mr Hague should starting now.

As it is, about the only definite policy so far, apart from opposition to devolution, is the firm rejection of a single European currency and hostility to further European integration. But the Tories are largely irrelevant to this and many other issues. They have lost the political initiative. Whether Britain enters a single currency will depend on Tony Blair's judgement, not William Hague's.

No one can tell what the result of the next general election will be. At present, it is Labour's to lose, and few would bet on this. Mr Hague may hope, and plan, for a return to office in five years. But much of his party is still behaving as if it will be ten years.

Peter Riddell

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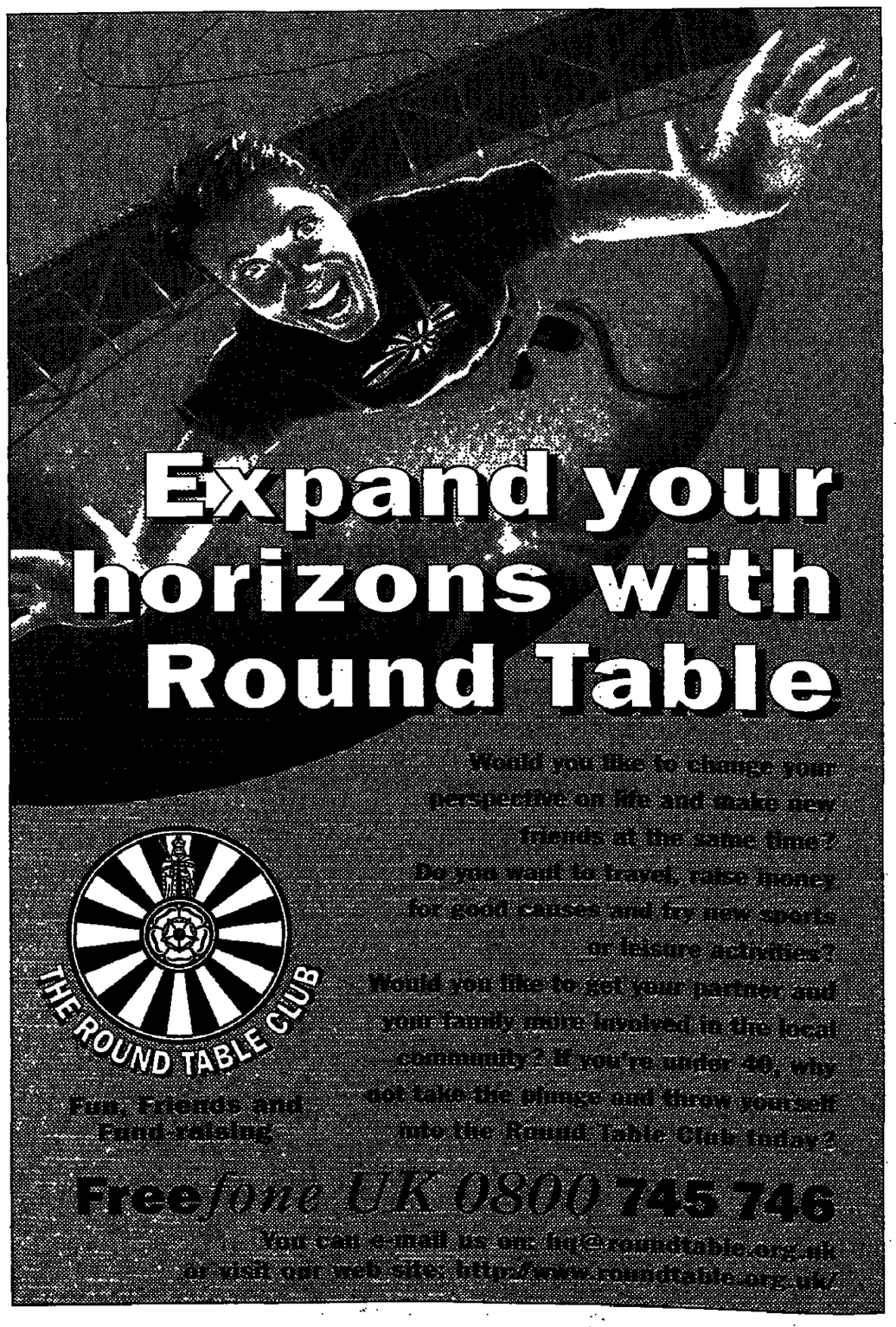

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Trouble behind the scenes still hampers revival

Tories' soft focus hides feud that lingers on, writes Michael Gove

SINGLE mothers, Asians, Afro-Caribbeans, Yorkshire suckler cow-owners, every deserving minority has had its hand held by the Conservatives in the week the Tory party presented a softer face. But behind the smiles the feud that brought the Tories to their current pass still festers.

The momentum for the Conservative cultural revolution at Blackpool came from a friendship forged around the last Cabinet's table. But the prospects of revival are still clouded by tensions apparent last week in the Shadow Cabinet room.

William Hague was elected not just to give the Tories a fresh face and a surer public relations touch but also to bring coherence and clarity on Europe. He made clear during the leadership election that unity could not be built on a "constantly shifting fudge". Since then he has been determined to draw a line in the sand but some of his colleagues are trying to kick it in his face.

Mr Hague has made attempts to fashion a policy on Europe both sceptical and inclusive but the strength of the agreed line — that the single currency is ruled out for the "foreseeable future" — has been tested by Shadow Cabinet dissidents such as David Curry whose interpretation of "foreseeable" implies ten minutes rather than the leadership's preferred version of ten years.

Hague supporters were muttering their irritation with Curry as they necked their Budweisers in the conference hotel on Thursday night but they were confident other factors were already working to the Tories' advantage.

The first of these is the political intelligence Hague displays, apparently much more attuned to the demands of modern campaigning than his predecessor.

Tory party staffers believe the deliberate downplaying of expectations before the result of the ballot on his leadership is evidence of greater grip. They also feel the leader's analysis in his speech of new Labour's lack of firm principled has the potential to convince.

Hague's handling of his own reform programme certainly looked adept. He was elected leader by the MPs over the heads of the activists in what amounts to an arranged marriage between Hague and his party. The party, initially suspicious, is now warming to the match, especially as Hague shows every sign of taking on a parliamentary party blamed by activists for the scale of defeat.

Hague's willingness to take on the Jurassic and geriatric tendency within his own party has been bolstered by the encouragement of the man he expected to be his leader. Michael Portillo and William Hague share a belief that the Tories should look softer, think harder and apologise fully if the Tories are to return to power.

Over dinner in the Portillo's Victoria Square home in the summer, William and Ffion and Michael and Carolyn had a chance to reflect on defeat. The fruits of that dinner were apparent in this week's reinvention.

Portillo: ally in Hague's battle with old guard

Mr Portillo's remodelling saw him abandon the ministerial pinstripes for sackcloth and ashes. "I have made many mistakes in my career," he confided to the 2,000-strong audience and the blue rinses who once admired him for being a bastard new adored him for saying sorry.

But their outlook is not universally shared. One Shadow minister on the Left thought the new tolerant tone "wonderful, but two years too late. If we'd had a speech like that from Portillo before the election we wouldn't be in the mess we are now". Another Shadow minister on the Right was a touch worried that, "we've moved too fast. We did a lot of work to defend the family and we can't forget we fought the last election with a commitment to pro-family taxation as the centrepiece of the manifesto."

Mr Portillo's lecture was only the most conspicuous remodelling on the Right.

Leadership ambitions had already wrought a transformation in some senior Tories. In the battle to succeed John Major the contest's hard man, Michael Howard, became makeover Mike. The Gordon Gekko pinstripes were swapped for subtler Savile Row shades. Speeches which were once barristerial tours de force now have references to Beavis and Butthead.

John Redwood sported a softer fringe and a suit and manner which are less buttoned-up.

The only display of humility in which Ken Clarke has indulged this week was the work of his wife Gillian. She preferred Doreen Cumpsty's bed and breakfast to the glitz and glamour of the conference hotel. The former Chancellor's reputation for prudence was underlined. Mr Clarke did stray off-message in an interview with the *Evening Standard*, when he confirmed he still wants to lead his party. But at the end of a week when the rest of his party has shown more of the gentle touch it looks as though the time for bruisers has passed.

PETER NICHOLLS

Blonde bombshell: Ffion Jenkins in that much-hyped dress; with the blonde she supplanted as party pin-up; and at the end of her fiancé's final conference address

Ffion is unfazed by her dress rehearsal

Damian Whitworth on a week that set Tory pulses racing

UNTIL yesterday this week's Conservative Party conference had followed the familiar pattern of recent years. A male Tory leader striving to dominate his party was eclipsed by a dazzling blonde whose brief cameo appearances stole the show. This time, however, the lady in question was the leader's fiancée, not his predecessor.

Such has been the excitement about Ffion Jenkins this week that for the official highlight of the conference, William Hague's speech yesterday, she kept a low profile in order to focus attention on him. She did not sit on the stage but slipped into the conference hall just before his solo grand entrance and tucked herself away in the middle of the second row where she clapped enthusiastically and laughed at jokes she must already have heard. Only when the speech was over was she pulled on to the platform by Mr Hague.

If Miss Jenkins had still been in the Welsh Office, where she was an anonymous civil servant until recently, she would have spent the last week poring over the minutiae of the Devolution Bill with Ron Davies, the Welsh Secretary. Instead, in her first conference, she has become the pin-up of the party; the dutiful, polite fiancée who also set the pulses of constituency chairmen galloping in an evening dress that was risqué without being too shocking.

The Ff Factor has supplanted even the Thatcher Effect. When Mr Hague and Miss Jenkins were photographed with Baroness Thatcher he said he was sandwiched between his two favourite ladies. If behaviour in the Imperial Hotel foyer is anything to go by, Miss Jenkins was a bigger favourite for conference-goers than even the former Prime Minister. There was a large turn out (and not just of press) to see Miss Jenkins descend a staircase in her dress than there was for the arrival of Lady Thatcher and Sir Denis. Lady Thatcher, as she does every year, grabbed headlines, but they were of nothing compared with the acres of coverage devoted to Ms Jenkins's much-hyped but mildly disappointing frock.

Considering that this was her first experience of intense media scrutiny she performed with accomplishment. At her solitary photocall she maintained as much dignity as is possible when sitting on a toadstool talking to a bemused toddler at Bradley Beaver's restaurant.

Throughout the week she posed with poise, refraining from grinning as much as Mr Hague, who has also adopted a strange habit of pointing at the cameras. On the stage yesterday, as the couple basked in the applause of a party desperate to shed its geriatric image, she put her arm round him, but he did not kiss her. Earlier in the week, when photographers had asked him to, he had said that they would have to wait until they were married.

"Ffion was nervous before the conference began but that is only to be expected," a friend said. "But she's a very cool and intelligent lady. She's not fazed by any of this."

Apart from laughing on a walkabout when *The Times* pointed out somebody wearing a HAGUE baseball cap and making the exciting disclosure that "it's going really well", she has remained silent and a senior member of the Hague camp said she was not intending to give any interviews. "I don't think she will talk to the press in the foreseeable future. That's not a policy decision, she just doesn't want to."

In December Mr Hague will become the first politician in living memory to marry while leading his party. For his bride, this week has been a handy dress rehearsal.

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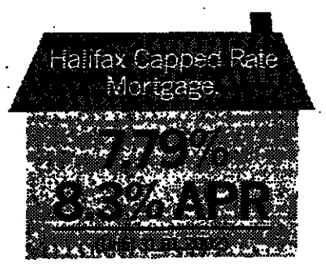

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'We'll be the only party of principle'

Hague offers alternative to Labour's 'cynicism'

The following is an edited version of William Hague's speech yesterday.

I SAID that I wanted a fresh conference. And I have got it. I believe that this week we have had the freshest and most constructive and exciting conference for years.

I said that I wanted an open conference. This week we have had some of the most open and vigorous and honest debates that our party, any party, has had for years and years. I said that I wanted a clear conference. And this week the message of change and renewal has come out of this hall with a clarity and directness that is rare in modern politics.

I said that I wanted a united conference. There is no doubt this week that you, you the conference, have demonstrated a new unity of purpose and a new unity of conviction that none of the pundits predicted. Fresh, open, clear and united. That is what I wanted to see and that is what this conference has delivered.

Far from being dead we have embarked on a process of reform and renewal that will rebuild our party, rejuvenate our membership, restore our confidence and make us fit to return to govern at the next general election.

As some of you may remember, I gave a speech in this very hall 20 years ago almost to the day. I told Margaret Thatcher what she had to do to be a successful Prime Minister. It was a bit presumptuous, but it worked. And you have to hand it to her, she took the message to heart. I spent three minutes 20 years ago telling Margaret what she needed to do. Then, to the lasting benefit of this country, she spent the next 13 years telling all of us what to do.

Six months from now, we will have our new constitution, the foundation of a new, united, inclusive, democratic, decentralised, and open party. Never again will we have a divided organisation. Never again will the voice of our members go unheard, and never again will we allow the good name of our party to be blackened by the greed and selfishness of a few. This week has been one of reflection, but it has also been one of reconstruction. Today I'd like to talk about my kind of Conservatism, the party I lead, the things I believe in.

I'd like to tell you about an open Conservatism that is tolerant, that believes freedom is about much more than economics, that believes freedom doesn't stop at the shop counter. I'd like to tell you about a democratic, popular Conservatism that listens, that has compassion at its core.

I want to tell you about a Conservatism rooted in its traditions, but embracing the future. I want to tell you about a changing Conservatism that acknowledges its mistakes. But I also want to tell you about a proud Conservatism that has served this nation well and will do so again.

We won't just be a party of power, we will be a party of principle, too. In the coming years, we'll be the only party of principle in this country. Listening to a Labour politician, you might well think Im being a bit unfair. "A hand up, not a hand out." "Tough on crime." "Opportunity for all." The words are all in their place. It all sounds pretty familiar. It should do. They are our words. It's no accident Labour adopts our words. Opinion polls and focus groups tell them they're popular. They could have saved their money. We could have told them that for free.

But just because they use our language, and have swapped the donkey jacket for the Armani suit, doesn't mean they actually believe in the principles that give that language its purpose. It is their lack of principle which is the central characteristic of the new Labour Government.

Tony Blair said that he ran as new Labour, that he won as new Labour, and that now he'll govern as new Labour. Well let me tell him we're going to oppose him as new Labour. New Labour. They're for everything but for nothing.

Tough, tender.
Hot, cold.
Soft, hard.
Fast, slow.
For you, for me.
To give, to take.
To stop, to start.

What sort of speech was that last week? Mr Blair, full of this, full of that. But what on earth did it all mean? What is he going to do? Well, I think I know. It means that on any issue, at any time he's happy to tell you one thing and then do something different. That's why we'll oppose them as new Labour. And that's why we'll beat them as new Labour.

Labour have lost their moral compass. They care most of all about what sounds good, what trips off the tongue, what plays well on the television bulletins, and what gets a headline in tomorrow's papers. Every Labour politician has to have his own focus group. Except, John Prescott, of course. He has a lack-of-focus group.

Well, politics is about much more than focus groups and short-term gimmicks. Responsible politicians have to make judgments about the rights and wrongs of issues. There are times when they have to ignore the opinion polls, when they have to take tough decisions. There are times when you've got to risk unpopularity, when you must look beyond tomorrow.

Labour are already ducking those choices. They've announced 39 policy reviews since the general election. Every time we ask them a difficult question they say they're setting up a review. And it's funny how these reviews never end. They never actually report. Imagine if the Second World War had been fought this way. You can just imagine them in 1940: "We shall review them on the beaches, we shall review them on the landing grounds, we shall review them in the fields and the streets; we shall review them in the hills; we shall never publish the results." I believe that Labour have introduced a new and deeply unattractive cynicism into British politics. A new cynicism that says it doesn't matter whether a policy is right or wrong but only whether it can be sold.

Let me give you an example. Imagine that a party had deliberately misrepresented its opponents' plans for the state pension. That it had deliberately and cynically played on the fears of the old and the vulnerable for its own immediate political advantage. Imagine that that same party, now in government, introduced in its very first budget a £5 billion tax on people's pension funds.

You'd think that was incredible. You'd think that no set of politicians could be so shameless. You would have thought that a party that had done all that would have felt more than a pang of conscience, more than a twinge of shame. You would have thought that a party that had manipulated people in that way, and then kicked them in the teeth, would be ashamed to show its face to the British people. But not new Labour.

We have no intention of stooping to a new politics without conscience. Let them stoop. We will conquer.

We're not fooled by the mood music of new Labour. Not like the Liberal Democrats, unfortunately. They've been completely mesmerised by these politics without values. They're jigging along happily to the Pied Piper of Downing Street.

> Politics is about more than focus groups and gimmicks

Paddy's proved a real pushover. He's been completely seduced. When the Prime Minister says come up and see my etchings he still expects to see some artwork. Everyone now knows for certain what we've always warned: if you vote Liberal you are supporting the Labour Party.

Mind you, I don't know who is going to regret this partnership most. Remember, the Liberals want to legalise cannabis but ban lottery scratch cards. They want a federal Europe but voted to boycott French wine. And Tony Blair wants to have an alliance with these people? Soon we'll be saying: don't vote Labour or you'll let the Liberals in.

So much for the parties that don't believe in anything. Let's talk about a party that does believe in something, that does have principles, values and purpose. Let's talk about ourselves.

I'm going to tell you what I believe in. First of all, I believe in freedom. In Thomas Jefferson's famous words, "the price of liberty is eternal vigilance". Two hundred years later we've got to be vigilant against a Government whose every instinct is to boss, to meddle, to interfere and to control. We are the only party in Britain which believes in freedom as a birthright to be protected rather than a concession to be handed down. So I believe in freedom.

And I believe in enterprise. I didn't learn about enterprise from economics textbooks and the back pages of the *Financial Times*. I learnt about enterprise first hand, from my own family. My father, before he retired, ran a small business. Hague Soft Drinks. We bottled such well-known brands as Hague Cola, Hague Cherryade, Hague Orangeade and my favourite, Hague Dandelion and Burdock. I said we'd be an honest party. So I'll be honest. Some flavours tasted better than others.

We were never rich. But we were comfortable. I knew from an early age what that comfort depended on: diligence, enterprise and initiative. Sound business practice, dedication, hard work and long hours. The same values that were the foundation of my family's business helped launch millions of similar small businesses under Conservative governments. Enterprise needed the Conservative Party then. Enterprise needs the Conservative Party now.

I believe in enterprise. And I believe in education. I have to believe in education. I'm only standing here today because of education. If Labour now builds on our achievements and brings forward the right policies, then we will support them. This subject is too important for any politician to bear a grudge.

But what have they done so far? They took the assisted places scheme, the scheme which helps bright children from poor families to go to some of the best schools in the country and abolished it. Can you believe it? Next year's youngsters will now be denied that opportunity. What a stupid and vindictive thing to do.

Not content with that, we now find grant maintained schools condemned. Grammar schools are under threat. Church schools will be stripped of their independence. I say to Labour: recognise and applaud diversity. Join us in the modern age which recognises diversity. Education needs the Conservative Party now.

Labour ask us to trust them on health. Trust them when waiting lists are going up? Trust them as they axe hospital building across the country? And trust them when they put Frank Dobson in charge of the NHS? I'm told that when Frank got into his ministerial car the other week, his driver said to him: "Have you heard the latest Frank Dobson joke, sir?" "But", he protested, "I am Frank Dobson". "Dont worry", said his driver, "I'll tell it to you slowly".

We hear the Government is committed to welfare reform. An enormous challenge. A job for someone of real dynamism, of intellectual rigour, a job for someone with real clout at the Cabinet table. A job for Harriet Harman. I hear that Tony Blair is planning a reshuffle. He thinks she's outlived her uselessness.

Conservatives believe that welfare dependency breeds despair and misery. If, despite everything, the Government can break this cycle of despair they will get our unswerving support and they will deserve it. We won't be afraid to support the Government if they are right. So I believe in obligation to others. And I believe in our nation.

Each one of us is proud to be Welsh, or Scottish, or Northern Irish or English. Or Yorkshire. And we have every right to be. I come from Yorkshire and I am marrying Wales. I'm not one of those politicians who looks at the United Kingdom through a pair of binoculars from inside the M25. I don't look at the world through the wrong end of an Islington drain pipe.

I know that Britain is more than the sum of its parts. I come from Yorkshire, and I love Wales but I call the United Kingdom my country.

> I abhor the damage that this Labour Government is doing

That is why I abhor the damage that this Labour Government is doing to our nation. They're pitting one part of our United Kingdom against another.

So I believe in the United Kingdom. And I believe in a Europe of nation states.

All Conservatives want to see a strong and prosperous Europe in which Britain plays a leading part. A Europe in which we work with our partners to bring down the barriers to free trade. An open Europe which embraces the countries of Central and Eastern Europe.

But we've got to have a flexible Europe of nation states. Europe itself is not a nation, and it should not aspire to be a nation. I have to tell you, there is a limit to European integration. And I must say, in my opinion, we are near that limit now.

The prospect of a single currency may present this country with one of the most momentous decisions in its history. For a lot of Conservatives, there are profound constitutional objections to a single currency. Others in our party, while not ruling out entry at some point, believe it would be a mistake for Britain to take part in such a risky economic experiment, with all its far reaching consequences, at least until we've had a decent opportunity to see whether it works. And that is why we say no to abolishing the pound for the foreseeable future.

There will always be some serious differences in any serious party. We will give our backbench MPs a free vote on a single currency. But what is most important is that the people should have a free vote and the final say in a referendum. Not the rigged and fudged referendum some in the Government want to see.

So I believe in a Europe of nation states. So I believe in freedom. I believe in enterprise. I believe in education. I believe in self-reliance. I believe in obligation to others. I believe in the nation.

So let's hold our heads high and say to new Labour and the whole world: these are the things we believe in, these are the values from which we will never retreat. Let's say to the world, this is what we believe in and this is what we will always stand for.

Let's challenge New Labour: this is what we believe, what do you believe? These are our values, where are yours? This is what is sacred to us, when will anything be sacred to you? Some people think none of this matters any more. They think we've no more need for beliefs. We've reached the end of history. The battle's been won, the game is over, the fat lady has sung. But I'm here to tell you they're wrong. Our beliefs and our values matter now more than ever.

THE WORDS THAT COUNT

William Hague matched Tony Blair in one respect yesterday: the use of **compassion/compassionate**. A textual analysis of their conference speeches reveals that he showed his softer side eight times — the same as Mr Blair last week.

But there were some big differences. Mr Hague spoke of **freedom** 21 times. Mr Blair never mentioned it.

The buzz-words and their frequency were: **Britain/British**, Hague 23, Blair 53; **country**, Hague 19, Blair 31; **nation**, Hague 20, Blair 19; **people**, Hague 34, Blair 44; **family**, Hague 6, Blair 3; **choice**, Hague 8, Blair 11 (but mostly hard choices); **modern**, Hague 3, Blair 21; **change**, Hague 7, Blair 16; **vision**, Hague 1, Blair 12; **reform** Hague 4, Blair 12.

Dandelion and Burdock all round!

William Hague acknowledging the applause of his Shadow Cabinet colleagues on the platform after his speech in Blackpool yesterday

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Robert Morgenthau, Manhattan DA and one of the city's last-liberals

DA fights death row lobby

TUNKU VARADARAJAN'S NEW YORK

AT ONE of my first criminal law tutorials at Oxford in 1981, my tutor and I talked at length about Robert Morgenthau, Manhattan's flinty district attorney. We discussed, I remember, "the American way", in which the discretion to prosecute alleged criminals can rest with a single, elected individual. I am delighted to report that Mr Morgenthau, now 78, is still DA, 16 years later. In fact, he has held that office uninterruptedly since 1975 and is up for re-election later this year, which should ensure that he is Manhattan's "Mr Prosecution" until at least 2001. Few are prepared to bet that this lifelong Democrat will not soldier on beyond that date.

Mr Morgenthau, often described as the incarnation of New York history, is the last powerful liberal in a city which was once a bastion of that creed. In recent years New York has swung to the right — with a new clamour, in particular, for capital punishment, culminating in its reintroduction in 1995 — and the spotlight has often fallen uncomfortably on Mr Morgenthau, who is a dogged opponent of the "try 'em and fry 'em" school.

This week he earned a volley of criticism for his refusal to seek the death penalty for a man accused of killing a police officer in May. The case was described by Rudolph Giuliani, the city's Mayor, and George Pataki, the state's Governor — Republicans both — as "precisely the reason the death penalty was established in New York". Yet even this "natural capital punishment case" failed to budge Mr Morgenthau. Writing in *The New York Times* two years ago, when the city was in the grip of an intense debate on the subject, he said of the death penalty: "It exacts a terrible price in dollars, lives and human decency. Rather than damping down the flames of violence, it fuels them while draining millions of dollars from more promising efforts to restore safety to our lives."

Many in New York are unhappy with his stance, not least the family of the dead police officer, Anthony Sanchez. The victim's embittered mother, Loretta, said: "In our eyes, it is not just. I think in a lot of eyes, it is not just."

Sanchez, a decorated officer with a spotless ten-year record as one of New York's finest, was shot when responding to an armed robbery call in the Chelsea district. His alleged killer, Scott Schneiderman, was a failed stockbroker who had entered his wealthy father's building in order to rob him.

ALMOST as one, New Yorkers turned on their favourite sons, the Yankees, this week after they lost the World Series baseball play-offs to the Cleveland Indians. The anger was not because of the defeat, although the city is struggling to accept that its batters and pitchers are no longer "world" champions. It was rather that the players, including pitcher Andy Petitte, above, did not seem to be mourning their demise. The Yankees flew back to New York and had a good old time at a downtown bar — "Yankee Panky", according to the New York Post.

How an alter ego failed the NYPD blue language test

NICHOLAS HYTNER, the director of *The Madness of King George*, made a confession to me recently: "I impersonated you the other day, although it wasn't a great success."

This, in a nutshell, was his story. He was in a taxi in New York, driven by a Haitian. The cabbie made an unorthodox manoeuvre, attracting the attention of a police car. The cops screeched up to the cab. The flustered Haitian was peppered with words beginning exclusively with "f" and "n".

Hytner tried to intervene. "I say," he said to the foul-mouthed officer. "You can't talk to him like that. Stop it immediately. I am the New York correspondent of the London *Times*." The officer told him to mind his own business, or words to that effect.

The story puzzles me. Why did the officer not listen to him? The line always seems to work when *I* use it.

PETER CARUANA, Gibraltar's Chief Minister, was in town this week at the United Nations, in his campaign for a better deal for the Rock. Sources tell me that he is getting less support than he would like from Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary. Unlike Malcolm Rifkind, his predecessor, who saw Mr Caruana as a plucky, Astérix-like figure keeping the "Romans" in Madrid at bay, Mr Cook is believed to be lukewarm about Gibraltar.

Preacher's star team had feet of clay

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

BILL McCARTNEY, head of the fastest-growing evangelical movement in the United States, was yesterday at the centre of controversy over his past as an American football coach.

Mr McCartney, whose Promise Keepers movement attracted 700,000 men to the centre of Washington last weekend in a show of family commitment, apparently failed to recognise the den of iniquity that he was running while in charge of American football for 12 years at the University of Colorado. The man who has consistently portrayed himself as an agent of God and has always known what is best for young men, transformed his Colorado team from perennial losers to frequent victors between 1982 and 1994.

But during that time, according to an article from *Sports Illustrated*, his recruits were accused of theft, serial rape, assault, extortion, drugs, criminal trespass and possession of weapons. The entire team was eventually required to attend a date-rape seminar. From 1986 to 1989 alone, 24 of the players were arrested.

Tobacco firms win US reprieve

FROM BRONWEN MADDOX IN WASHINGTON

THE tobacco industry won an unexpected reprieve yesterday when a landmark trial about "secondhand smoking" ended in settlement, forestalling a jury verdict that would have set a precedent for dozens of follow-up cases.

The suit, which was the first to claim damages from "passive smoking" — inhaling smokers' cigarette fumes — was also the first class action against the tobacco industry.

It was filed on behalf of thousands of flight attendants based in America who claimed that they were made ill by breathing smoke on passenger aircraft.

The settlement, which was not disclosed, ended the four-month trial before the jury was asked to consider a verdict. Dozens of follow-up cases were expected to be launched immediately if the defendants — five cigarette makers and two industry groups — had lost.

The tobacco companies denied that secondhand smoke had caused the flight attendants' lung cancer, heart disease and other symptoms, and claimed that other high-altitude factors such as ozone were responsible.

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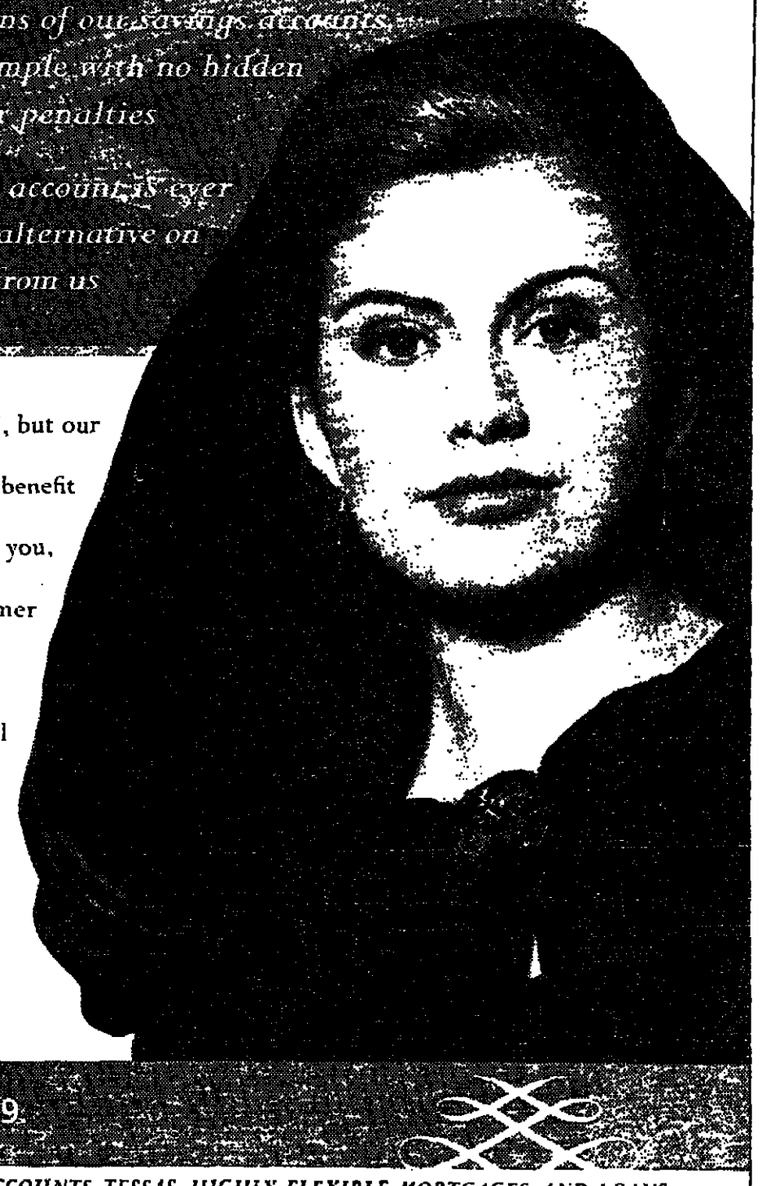

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Dubious tale of murder in high places rocks France

A new book is linking François Léotard, the former Defence Minister, with the death of anti-corruption MP, **Ben Macintyre** writes

"WHAT is at stake here is the fundamental workings of democracy, the very rule of law," Jacques Chirac declared this week in his most solemn presidential tones.

The threat to French democracy that had brought the President to such a peak of moral indignation came in the unlikely form of a short and distinctly dubious book by a pair of investigative journalists claiming, without proof, that two former conservative Cabinet ministers had ordered the 1994 murder of a fellow member of parliament.

The charges could hardly be more spectacular, and the ensuing scandal has rocked the French Establishment with a astonishing tale of assassination, corruption, organised crime, political conspiracy and journalistic ethics. In February 1994 Yann Piat, a former MP for the far-right National Front who had defected to the centre-right Union for French Democracy (UDF) was shot dead in her car on a deserted road in the Riviera by gunmen on a motorcycle.

Piat, an MP in the Var department along the Côte d'Azur, is known to have been investigating allegations of mafia money-laundering involving Defence Ministry land in the region. It was widely assumed that the 44-year-old anti-corruption campaigner was the victim of a mafia "hit", and after a long investigation two young men from Marseilles were charged with her murder. They will be tried next year, but investigators have never established who was behind the assassination.

Then last week, journalists André Rougeot and Jean-Michel Verne, identified the men allegedly behind the assassination by code-names — *Encornet* (The Squid) and *Trottinette* (The Scooter) — but few were unaware that they referred to two of the most prominent politicians in France: François Léotard, then Defence Minister, now head of the UDF and widely tipped as a potential presidential candidate, and his political ally, Jean-Claude Gaudin, former Urban Affairs Minister, Mayor of Marseilles and powerful president of the Provence-Côte d'Azur regional assembly.

Earlier this week, as the political gossip-mill roared into overdrive, M Léotard and M Gaudin came forward to denounce the book, demanding that its authors produce their proof or face libel charges. The enraged M Léotard indirectly blamed his bitter rivals and enemies within the Gaullist RPR party, allies of the UDF in the previous Government, or the National Front for the smears.

Next March, M Léotard is planning to run for the presidency of the southern region against, among others, Jean-Marie Le Pen, the National Front leader.

To some, the level of outrage seems out of all proportion to the quality of the allegations which are, to say the least, thin.

The source behind the allegations in *The Yann Piat Affair: Murderers at the Heart of Power* is identified only as a "general". This unnamed individual, claiming there had been a second "team" on the scene when Piat was murdered near her home in Toulon, said he had intercepted the assassins immediately after the murder and had been shown signed documents ordering the killing. He said that the incident had been filmed, but no such proof has been produced.

The authors alleged that Piat had amassed evidence, including a computer disk and photographs, linking the two unnamed senior politicians with the mafia and a plot to launder cash by selling off disused army training grounds to corrupt developers near Fréjus, where M Léotard was Mayor.

The charges, whether true or not, have refocused attention on a still-unsolved political assassination and a region of France riddled with organised corruption. Before she was murdered, Piat had vigorously attacked local politicans for their links with the local mafia.

There is one final disquieting element that may be linked to the mystery. Last week, Marseilles police found the body of André Isoardo, a member of the Provence regional council, who also defected from the National Front to the UDF. Isoardo had been shot five times: in the hand, the stomach, the neck and finally, fatally, in the mouth. More surprising than the death, or even the victim, was the coroner's verdict: the politician, it was formally announced, had committed suicide.

John Lloyd, page 22
Leading article, page 23

Desert flight festival will go with a bang

Pilot who broke sound barrier in 1947 is to fly again, writes **Giles Whittell**

HIGH over the Mojave Desert, the distinctive crack of an F15 fighter breaking the sound barrier heralded more than a routine training mission. At the controls, half a century after making supersonic history in a lethal rocket plane nicknamed the "Flying Brick", General Chuck Yeager was at it again.

Starting today, the test pilot will mark the 50th anniversary of his legendary flight in the Bell X-1 research rocket plane with a week of deafening festivities at the dusty Edwards Air Force Base where he launched the era of supersonic aviation in 1947.

General Yeager, an American, now retired, performed his first punch through the sound barrier with two broken ribs earned chasing his young wife over the Mojave on horseback the previous night. When he re-enacts the flight on Tuesday in a twin-engined F15E Strike Eagle it will be with the relatively minor handicap of a 74-year-old's reflexes.

By chance, the anniversary of one of the century's most dramatic technological breakthroughs comes as the British *Thrust SSC* team is poised to hurtle past the same milestone on land, on a similar barren waste 500 miles to the north in Nevada.

In the five intervening decades supersonic flight has evolved to a multibillion-dollar branch of the superpower arms race — one that the United States can be said to have won with the SR-71 Blackbird, capable of travelling at over three times the speed of sound. Thanks to Concorde, breaking Mach 1 has also become a fact of life for many. Yet like the Thrust team, General Yeager and a tiny crew of technicians were forced to shrug off doubting pundits and self-styled experts who in General Yeager's case claimed the sound barrier was an unbreakable, invisible "brick wall in the sky".

The first sign that the naysayers were wrong was a wobbling machometer. "Suddenly the needle began to fluctuate," General Yeager wrote in his autobiography. "It went up to .965 Mach — then tipped right off the scale. I thought I was seeing things! We were flying supersonic! And it was as smooth as a baby's bottom. Grandma could be sitting up there sipping lemonade."

Yeager: returning to scene of his triumph

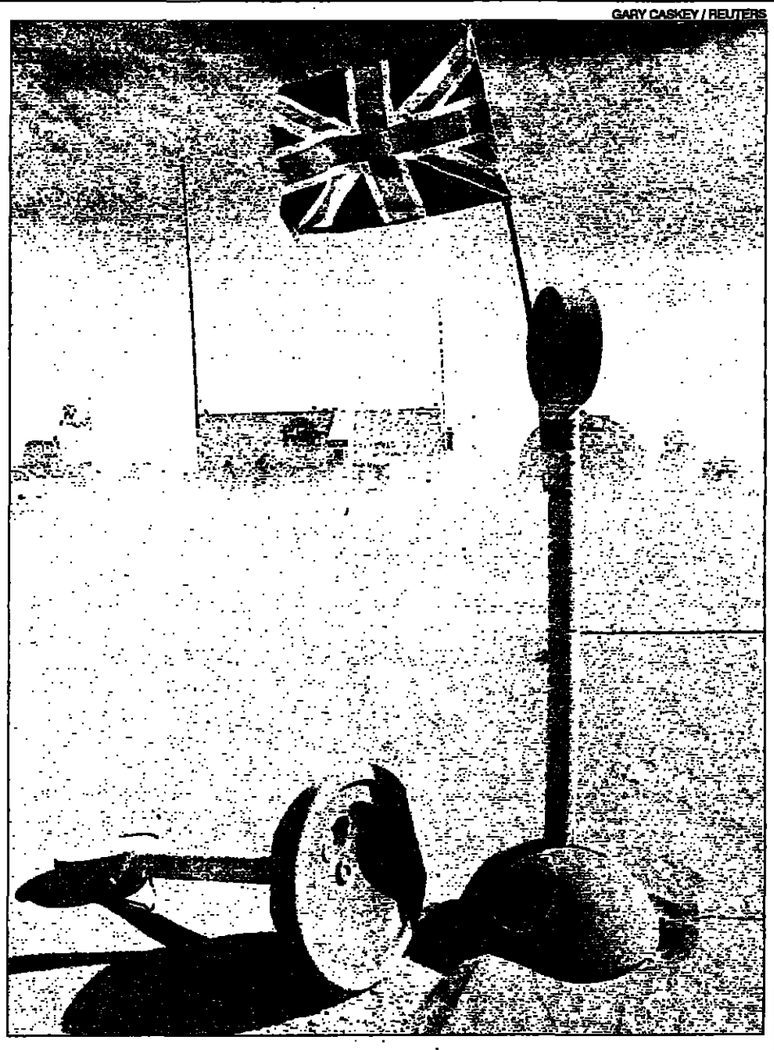
The 24-year-old was burning several gallons of alcohol and liquid oxygen a second, levelling off at 42,000ft having been dropped from a B29 mother ship in a stubby orange aircraft he likened to a 50-calibre machinegun bullet'. He had named the X-1 *Glamorous Glennis* after his wife for good luck.

Bell's chief civilian test pilot had stopped flying the X-1 at Mach 0.8 because the company would not pay him an extra $150,000 (£93,000) danger money. General Yeager broke the sound barrier on his Air Force wages.

Lacking a degree, General Yeager was ineligible for the space programme, but his claim to have attended a "college of life and death" is typically sound. Aged 20, he shot down five German aircraft in one day. The following year he was shot down over France only to escape to England via a brutal winter crossing of the Pyrenees in the course of which he saved a wounded comrade's life by *amputating his leg. In his* time at Edwards, 30 fellow test-pilots died.

Critics, including at times his wife, who died of cancer in 1990, have variously accused him of arrogance, egocentrism and a troubling inability to show emotion. He should answer at least one of these complaints on Tuesday when, in front of 500,000 spectators, he will fly a twin-engined F15E to 30,000ft, "take it to about Mach 2.1 and lay down a pretty good sonic boom".

GARY CASKEY / REUTERS



A duststorm sweeps through the *Thrust SSC* compound in the Black Rock Desert in Nevada as the team waits for a break in the weather to attempt its goal of breaking the sound barrier on land. Five weeks spent fine-tuning the twin-jet car has taken it to an unofficial top speed of 750mph and left it "very stable, very fast, with bags of power left", said Richard Noble, the team's leader (Giles Whittell writes). But a vast Alaskan low-pressure system moved in just as problems with the car's breaking and on-board computer systems were solved.

Dust cloud over Thrust

Court allows ailing Papon to stay out of jail for years

FROM BEN MACINTYRE IN PARIS

A BORDEAUX court yesterday ordered that the alleged Nazi collaborator, Maurice Papon, be released from prison during his trial, prompting furious accusations that the retired bureaucrat, charged with sending hundreds of Jews to their deaths in the Second World War, will be allowed to die without seeing the inside of a jail cell ever again. M Papon, 87, will remain free even if convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in the current trial, until all legal appeals have been heard.

That process could take years and, because the former official of the collaborationist Vichy regime has acute heart disease, he would almost certainly die before the final appeals court verdict, the families of his alleged victims said. Court-appointed doctors had recommended that the accused be detained in a secure hospital, but the court went further, ruling he should be set at liberty given his "great age, the length of the trial and his state of health".

Arno Klarsfeld, a lawyer representing civil plaintiffs in the case, described the ruling as "scandalous". The president of the court "has shown where his sympathies lie ... this trial no longer makes sense, since the accused is under no risk of prison", M Klarsfeld said. Michel Slitinsky, whose father perished at Auschwitz, denounced the "strategy" of the defence to prevent his imprisonment. "They say this is a very old man. In the deportation convoys, there were very young children," M Slitinsky said.

On Thursday, his third night at Gradignan jail outside Bordeaux, M Papon complained of heart pains and was taken to a hospital intensive care unit where his lawyers described his symptoms as "stress bordering on a heart attack".

"During the night the legal action against my client was very nearly brought to a definitive end," Jean-Marc Varaut said yesterday, adding that "M Papon was delighted and surprised" by the court's decision.

Even if he is convicted and if, as expected, his own death then intervenes before his legal appeals are exhausted, M Papon will have spent three days in prison: roughly 2½ minutes for each of his alleged victims.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Blasts in Delhi on eve of royal visit

Delhi: At least 12 people were injured in three separate explosions, believed to have been caused by bombs, in the Indian capital yesterday, two days before the start of a state visit by the Queen.

Two of the explosions were on buses in the north and east of the city and a third near a railway track in the old district. The suspected bombs went off on the eve of the Hindu festival of Dussehra. Delhi has witnessed similar explosions at this time in the last two years. A police spokesman said 12 people had been injured, although the United News of India gave the figure as 16, with four people seriously hurt. UNI quoted Sahib Singh Verma, Delhi's Chief Minister, as saying that the timing of the blasts pointed "the finger of suspicion towards foreign elements". He did not elaborate. *(Reuters)*

Police beat anti-Moi MPs

Nairobi: Kenyan police beat up and arrested several members of parliament while dispersing a rally called to snub celebrations marking President Moi's 19-year hold on power. Witnesses said that the MPs — Paul Muite, Oloo Ogeka, Henry Ruhiu and Benjamin Ndumbai — were beaten before being detained along with a dozen aides. Mr Muite, who is also a human rights activist, was "in a bad shape" in hospital last night. Other MPs managed to evade arrest. Police units later stormed a shanty dwelling near Kamukunji, on the outskirts of the capital, in pursuit of stone-throwing youths who were angered by the disruption of the reform rally. *(Reuters)*

Tokyo to curb paedophiles

Tokyo: The Japanese capital is to lose its notoriety as a paradise for paedophiles, thanks to a new law that makes paid sex with children a criminal offence (Robert Whymant writes). When the law comes into force on December 16, people who pay for sex with anyone under 18 will be liable to up to a year's jail term and a £2,600 fine. Under existing rules, sexual contact with children under 13 is illegal but relations with teenagers aged 13 or over are allowed unless coercion is involved. Members of civic groups handed out leaflets advising people of the change.

Prodi cool on support offer

Rome: Fausto Bertinotti, the leader of Italy's hardline Communist Refoundation, who on Thursday toppled the centre-left Government of Romano Prodi, right, yesterday proposed supporting the same coalition with a specific programme for one year. But Signor Prodi, in Strasbourg for a Council of Europe summit, reacted coolly to the offer, saying that he was not prepared to discuss any proposals still based on opposition to his draft budget. *(Reuters)*

Mexican hurricane toll rises

Miami: Rescue crews searched through piles of mud and collapsed buildings yesterday for scores of people still missing after Hurricane Pauline swept through Mexico's tourist resort of Acapulco, leaving at least 123 dead and thousands homeless (David Adams writes). President Zedillo cut short a state visit to Germany and was expected to return home to take charge of the rescue efforts. Officials fear that the death toll will perhaps double. The 115mph storm left the normally sunny port city knee-deep in muddy water and strewn with uprooted trees.

Move to disarm child soldiers

Freetown: The head of Sierra Leone's junta, Major Johnny Paul Koroma, left, has ordered the immediate disarmament of all 5,000 child soldiers in the West African country, state radio said. The national army claimed to have demobilised about 1,500 of its children, but observers say half that number are still in combat situations. The Kamajor militia, fighting for the return of civilian President Ahmad Tejan Kabbah who was ousted in May, has about 1,000 children in its ranks. *(AFP)*

US death rate hits record low

Washington: America's death rate has hit a record low, according to federal health statistics released yesterday. They showed that a marked drop in Aids-related illnesses had sharply affected figures (Tom Rhodes writes). Led by a record 26 per cent decline in Aids deaths, the rate dropped to 493.6 deaths per 100,000 population, the lowest since the first statistics in 1900.

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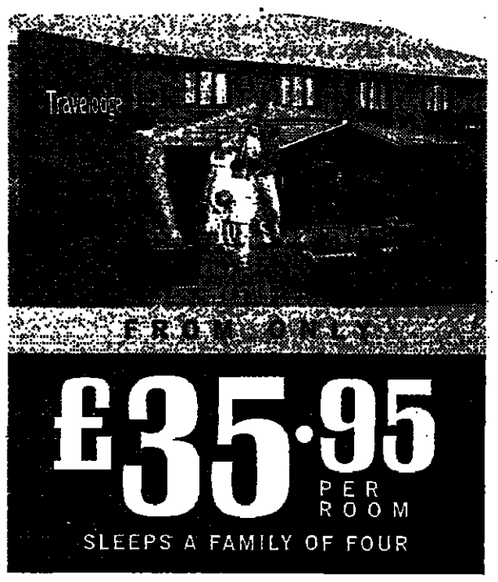

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Hussein orders Mossad team to quit Jordan

FROM CHRISTOPHER WALKER IN JERUSALEM

KING HUSSEIN has ordered the expulsion of the entire intelligence mission from the Israeli Embassy in Amman and demanded that Israel dismiss Danny Yatom, the chief Mossad spymaster, according to Israeli media reports quoting top Jordanian officials.

The disclosures in the two biggest-selling Tel Aviv papers and on army radio came as Israel was put on maximum security alert for Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year, after new intelligence warnings that Hamas will try to exact a bloody revenge for the bungled Mossad attempt to assassinate its political head, Khaled Meshaal, in Jordan on September 25.

Israel grinds to a 25-hour halt for the Day of Atonement when observant Jews pray and fast and the only vehicles on the roads are ambulances. Special guards have been placed round synagogues and all public areas. Few Israelis can forget that it was on Yom Kippur in 1973 that Arab states launched a surprise war designed to catch them off guard.

The King's action is regarded as highly damaging to Israel's security interests, as Amman has been used as the main Mossad base for gathering information on Syria and Iraq. Until the botched attempt to poison Mr Meshaal outside his Amman office, co-operation between Mossad and its Jordanian equivalent against radical Palestinian elements had been good since peace was signed in 1994.

News of the latest spin-off from the biggest operational and planning disaster in Mossad's history came as Israel confirmed that the Israeli Embassy in Amman had been attacked with two petrol bombs on Thursday night. Officials denied a German news agency report that there had later been shooting around the heavily guarded compound.

Mr Meshaal had said shortly before the attempt to burn down the embassy that the military wing of Hamas would "know their duty" after the attempt to kill him which was averted only after Israel sent an antidote against its own poison. Last month Islamic militants wounded two Israeli security guards in Amman as part of their campaign against the normalisation of Israeli-Jordanian ties.

Binyamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, had released Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the Hamas founder, and other Jordanian and Palestinian prisoners in an effort to mollify Jordan and to secure the release of the two Israeli agents involved in the murder mission.

The head of the Mossad mission in Amman and his agents have returned home "on the express orders of King Hussein", even though Israel claims they were not involved in the attempt to kill Mr Meshaal, Israeli army radio said.

Israeli security experts said that the denials of knowledge rang hollow as four members of the Mossad hit team, including one woman, sought refuge in the embassy for 48 hours after the mission's failure. "Until now the King has refused to forgive. At this stage he has announced there will be no more collaboration between the two countries in the defence sphere in all its various forms and instructed his officials to send back to Israel everyone who is involved or suspected of being involved in Mossad work," wrote Smadar Perry, Israel's senior Arab affairs correspondent, in *Yediot Aharonot*.

Ms Perry added: "The Jordanians also transmitted a message to Israel that as long as people who were involved in the operation [to assassinate Meshaal] still serve in Mossad, there will be no co-operation whatsoever."

As part of a detailed investigation of the botched operation, the paper quoted one senior Jordanian official as explaining the anger of King Hussein, who had entertained Israelis in his palace only days before the murder bid.

"Imagine the situation in which the host in a bedouin society opens his house to a stranger according to the best tradition of hospitality, but when the host turns his back for a minute he discovers to his astonishment that the guest took advantage of the opportunity to rape his wife," the close aide to the monarch said. "How would Israel react if our intelligence agents would have done something like that in Israel?"

Levy apologises over passports

Ottowa: Parliament cheered yesterday when Lloyd Axworthy, the Foreign Minister, announced that he had just received a full apology from David Levy, the Israeli Foreign Minister (Richard Clerouxwrites). Mr Axworthy said Mr Levy had promised "that the use of forged Canadian passports by Israel would never happen again". The apology clears the way for Canadian Ambassador David Berger to return to Israel. He left after Mossad used forged Canadian passports in Jordan.

FAYEZ NURELDINE / EPA

Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, the Hamas leader who spent eight years in Israeli jails, prays in his wheelchair in Gaza City yesterday

Congolese militiamen take airport

Kinshasa: Militia fighters in Congo who seized Brazzaville airport yesterday moved on to attack President Lissouba's riverside palace, diplomats and relief workers said. There is small-arms fire around the palace now. We cannot confirm that it is the Cobra [militia] fighting, but that seems probable," said one diplomat in Kinshasa in touch with Brazzaville.

A Congolese government military source said Cobra militia, who support the former military ruler, Denis Sassou Nguesso, had taken the treasury building. Smoke rose from the government-held south of the city and areas in the north held by the militia.

President Lissouba had earlier admitted losing control of Brazzaville's international airport. He was in Kinshasa, capital of the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo, during yesterday's fighting. *(Reuters)*

Zimbabwe farmers flee rioting strikers

FROM JAN RAATH IN TRELAWNEY, ZIMBABWE

WHITE farming families have had to be evacuated from one of Zimbabwe's most prosperous tobacco-growing areas after hundreds of striking farmworkers ransacked homesteads and wrecked farm machinery.

A score of pickup trucks, driven by young white farmers and laden with armed riot police sped through the flat tobacco lands of Trelawney, about 50 miles northwest of Harare on Thursday, while air force helicopters thumped overhead, in a disturbing reminder of the Rhodesian war when white farmers fought black nationalist guerillas.

By yesterday morning, about 200 demonstrators had been arrested after a security operation that appeared to have been organised by farmers and the disturbance subsided. No injuries were reported among the 144 farming families, but several workers were said to have been assaulted by agitators and police officers. The violence erupted on Wednesday as the first strike by the country's farm labour force went into its second week. Workers are demanding a 135 per cent increase to their basic monthly wage of Zim$359 (£18).

"We are on top of it now, but it is very tense still," Warwick Evans, chairman of the Trelawney-Darwendale farmers' association said. "We have not lived in fear here before, but we are living in fear now. There is a lot of uncertainty."

He said that about 30 families were evacuated on Wednesday after mobs of up to 300 men moved from farm to farm, forcing workers to join them. They surrounded homesteads, chanting anti-white abuse and threatening to kill the occupants. They smashed vehicles and equipment, pulled up crops, spilled chemicals and fuel and tore down fencing.

Gates at a Moscow news conference yesterday

Microsoft maestro targets Russian missiles

FROM RICHARD BEESTON IN MOSCOW

BILL GATES, the Microsoft billionaire, yesterday described plans to take his information revolution into space, using Russian ballistic missiles once targeted at American cities.

On a two-day visit to Moscow to promote his computer software company Mr Gates revealed details of a scheme to use converted SS20 missiles to establish a global network of more than 300 satellites in low orbit around the world.

The satellite network would enable anyone living in even the most remote regions on the globe to access the Internet and would revolutionise communications technology, particularly in the Third World.

To make the system work all the satellites must be placed in orbit within 18 months and Teledesic, the Gates company spearheading the operation, would need to use American, European and Russian rockets. Under the terms of the Start accord Russia must dispose of hundreds of missiles by 2003.

"Teledesic needs a lot of launch capability," said Mr Gates, who described the plan as at an early stage. "There is a possibility of taking weapons that have to be decommissioned and using them as launch vehicles."

Space experts said that while the system would be far cheaper than using conventional rockets like the European Space Agency's *Arianne* system, the missile conversion project had so far recorded mixed results.

"The problem is that these missiles were designed to carry nuclear warheads," said one industry expert. "The G-force and vibrations are very strong and can damage a telecommunications satellite."

Mr Gates said Russia had a bright future in the field of information technology but said piracy of software systems was slowing progress.

Democrats reveal Reagan fund tape

FROM TOM RHODES IN WASHINGTON

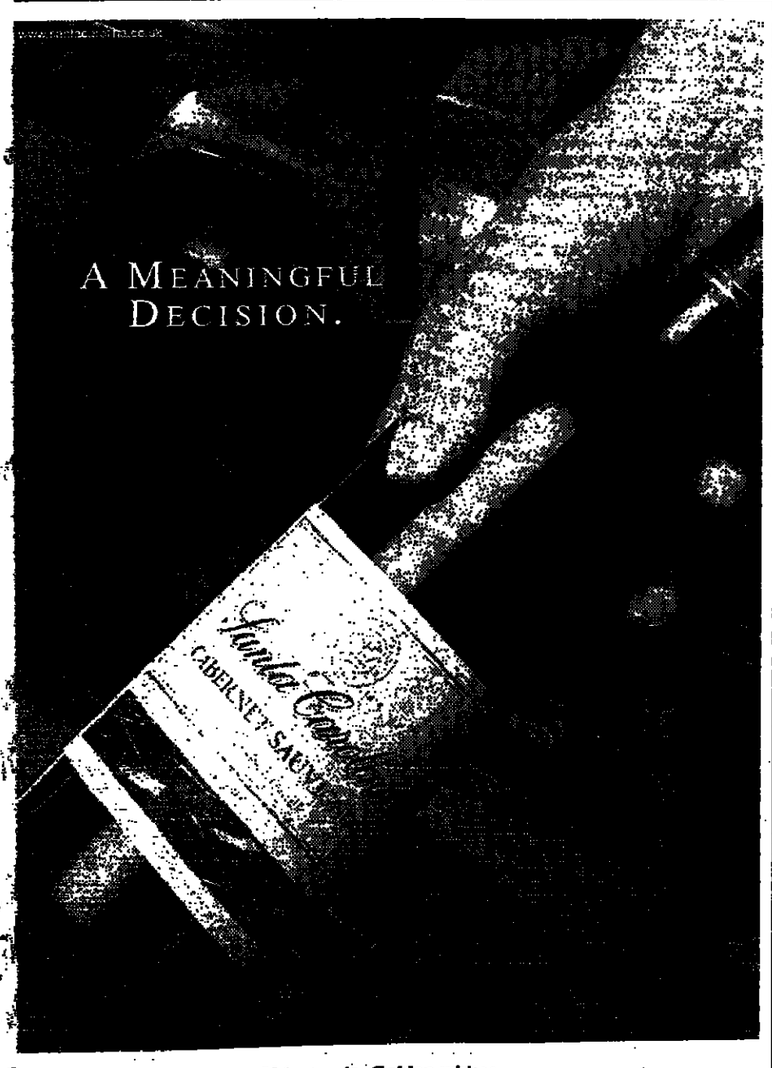
JANET RENO, the American Attorney-General, declaring that she was "mad" about the belated White House release of controversial videotapes, yesterday emerged among the ranks of President Clinton's critics.

Republicans were delighted at Ms Reno's comments, which marked an extraordinary public assault by the Justice Department on the White House.

Although she continues to maintain that coffee mornings shown on 44 tapes released last weekend do not break federal election law, Ms Reno said the delay had frustrated and angered her as well as placing strain on her relationship with the White House. She has launched an inquiry into why she was given the tapes months after all fundraising documents had been requested by the Justice Department and Congress. Ms Reno was particularly annoyed that they had appeared after her own decision not to appoint an independent counsel to investigate alleged irregular fundraising by Mr Clinton last year. The White House said it had found the footage several days earlier.

"I was mad," Ms Reno said. "When you have a situation where the White House has recognised responsibility to produce the documents, it is very, very frustrating to have them produced in such a delayed fashion. And I also thought that we should have been told immediately, as soon as they were found." Democrats, meanwhile, yesterday unearthed a ten-year-old video of President Reagan appealing to Republican donors at the White House, hoping this would counter renewed criticism of their actions last year.

The tape, leaked to ABC News and CNN by Democratic sources, showed Mr Reagan meeting dozens of contributors in the East Room. During the 1987 reception held for the Republican Eagles, the donors who had each given $10,000 to the party that year, Mr Reagan pledged to "campaign hard" for the Republican nominee and talked about the importance of winning the 1988 presidential election. "And let me ask you now, and I know this is silly, but can I count on you to help?" he asks.



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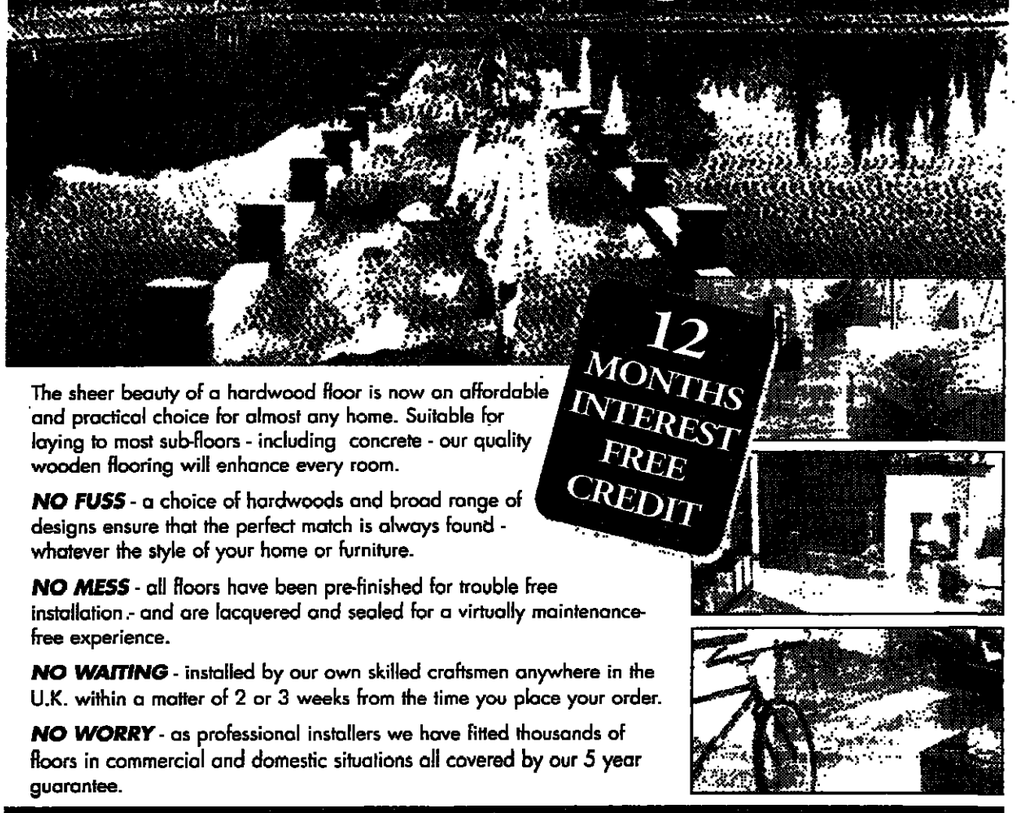

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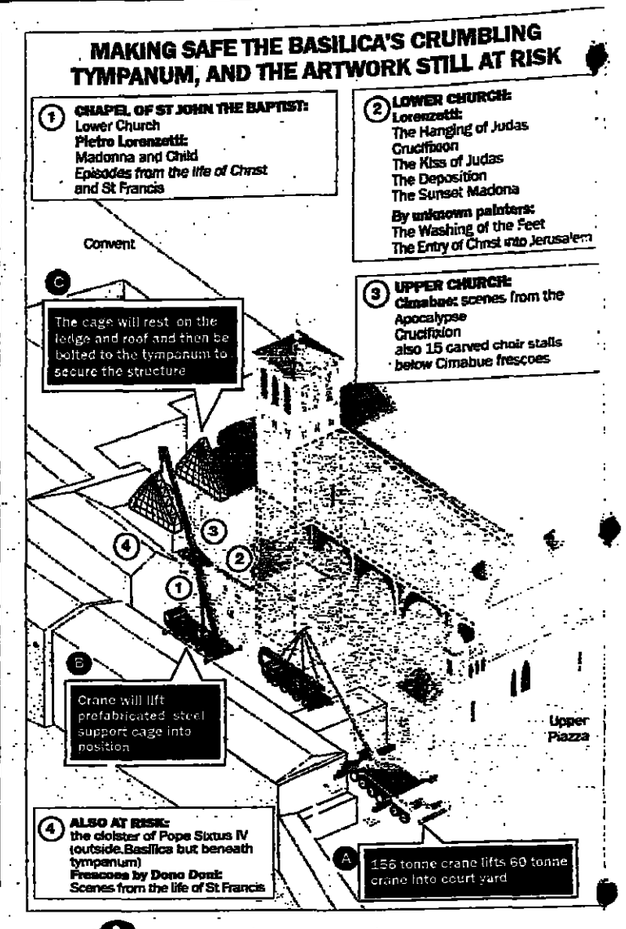
STEFAN DILLER / AKG

Madonna and Child with St Francis and St John the Evangelist, the most admired of the Lorenzetti masterpieces, which engineers are desperate to protect



Assisi battles to save the frescoes

STEFAN DILLER / AKG

Firemen check the Madonna atop the church for safety

Richard Owen in Assisi reports on efforts by engineers, working under crumbling masonry, to win a vital race against time

ITALIAN engineers yesterday started mounting an "extremely delicate and dangerous" operation to shore up the Basilica of St Francis by using giant cranes. They said that "one false move" would bring tonnes of masonry crashing down into the church "with the force of a bomb", destroying priceless frescoes by Cimabue and Lorenzetti, a 15th-century cloister and the irreplaceable basilica library.

Fears centre on the tympanum, a huge, recessed triangular pediment 120ft up on the side of the basilica, above the left transept. It was damaged in the double earthquake two weeks ago, which brought down part of the vaulted ceiling inside the Upper Church, killing four people.

More of the tympanum, which weighs 70 tonnes, crumbled when another earthquake rocked Assisi last Monday. The stones have given way round the triple window at the centre of the pediment, leaving a hole through which the sky is visible.

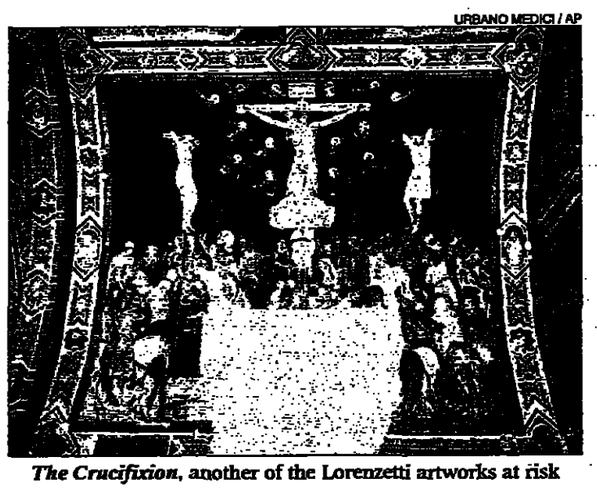
"If it falls, either because there is another quake or because we get the rescue operation wrong, the damage will be irreparable," said Giorgio Croci, the engineer in charge, as we watched the huge cranes manoeuvring into place. "The tympanum will smash through the roof. We are living a nightmare: to save our heritage, we are putting human life at risk. We have agonised all week about what to do."

Antonio Paolucci, the former Minister of Culture who is overseeing the restoration at Assisi, looks a worried man. "This is a race against time and the next tremor," he said. "The Basilica of St Francis is not only one of the most precious Christian buildings in the world, and a symbol of peace, it contains some of the most important paintings in the history of art."

The basilica has been shored up with scaffolding over the past two weeks, while restorers finish sifting through the rubble for pieces of fresco behind a high wooden wall, set up to keep out sightseers and potential thieves.

But surveyors are still not sure how unstable the great 13th-century building is. Professor Croci said he would have preferred to dismantle the crumbling tympanum, but this had been ruled out as too risky. Instead a 60-tonne crane with a 60-yard-long telescopic arm will lift a prefabricated steel-mesh cage over the tympanum, where it will rest on a narrow stone shelf and be secured by steel bands. Engineers said the priority was to hold the pediment in place, with a decision to be taken later on whether and how to rebuild it. "We have to do something, it's hanging by a thread," Professor Croci said.

URBANO MEDICI / AP



The Crucifixion, another of the Lorenzetti artworks at risk

In the Upper Church, where the floor has been covered in hundreds of old mattresses as a precaution, the collapse would bring down key frescoes by Cimabue, including *Scenes from the Apocalypse*, and his magnificent *Crucifixion*, in which the painter shows St Francis kneeling at the foot of the Cross. Both are blackened and faded, but are considered crucial to the birth of Western art.

In the Lower Church, the left transept was mainly decorated by Lorenzetti, who painted the frescoes when he was 30 and at the height of his powers. They depict Judas hanging himself after betraying Jesus; Jesus washing the feet of his disciples; a *Crucifixion* full of human crowd detail, with the two thieves placed on either side of Jesus for the first time in Western art; *The Entry of Christ into Jerusalem*, with Jerusalem shown as a Sienese city of crenellated towers in clear, sharp colours; the *Kiss of Judas*, with the first depiction in Italian painting of a starry night sky; and a *Deposition*.

The most admired of the Lorenzetti masterpieces is his *Madonna and Child with St Francis and St John the Evangelist*, more affectionately known as the Sunset Madonna because of the breathtaking impression made when the setting sun strikes the gold of the fresco. The Virgin Mary and the Infant Jesus appear to be deep in conversation, while the Virgin points to St Francis: the interpretation in Assisi is that Jesus is asking his mother who loved him more, St Francis or the Beloved Disciple.

Also at risk are the chapel of St John the Baptist, built by the Orsini family, which contains another *Madonna and Child* by Lorenzetti, and the cloister of Sixtus IV — the Fransciscan Pope — reached by a stone staircase near the Lorenzetti frescoes in the Lower Church. Built between 1474 and 1476, the cloister consists of two delicately arched loggias round a courtyard with a rainwater cistern in the middle. The walls bear 16th-century frescoes by Dono Doni, and ground-floor rooms house the library, with 80,000 volumes and thousands of rare manuscripts on theology, music and art history.

☐ *The Order of Friars Minor Conventual, the branch of the Franciscans which cares for the tomb of St Francis and the Basilica in Assisi, has opened a bank account for those who wish to help. The bank is the Cassa di Risparmio di Perugia. The account is titled "Basilica di San Francesco in Assisi", account number: 26000/03 (code: ABI-6235-CABO3001)*

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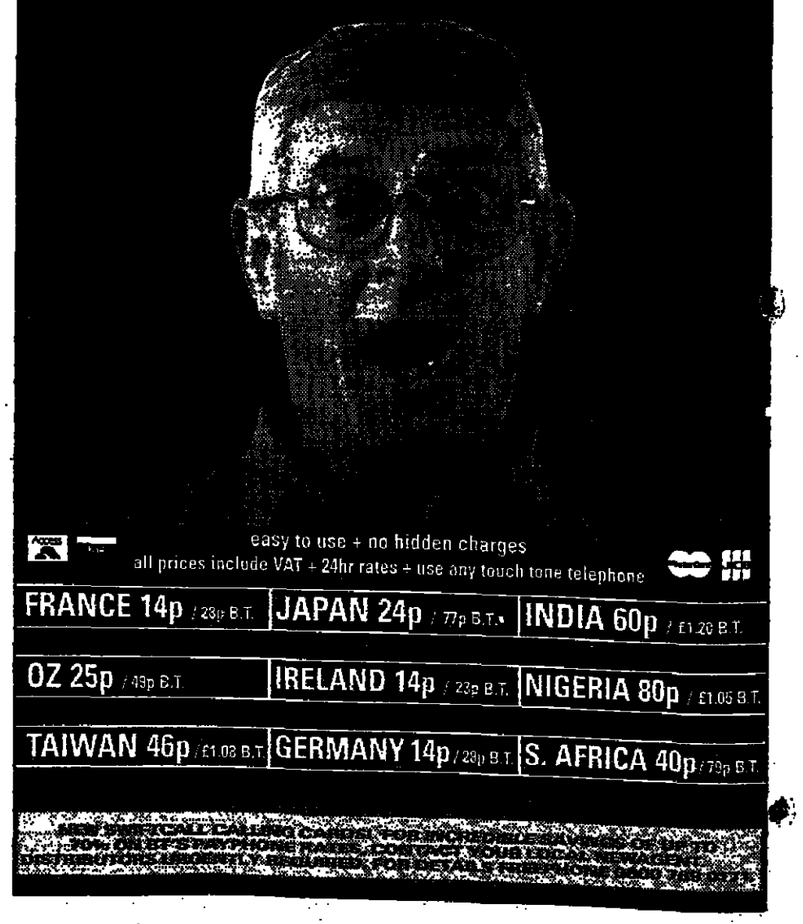

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Private police put finger on the usual suspects

Residents feel safer, but police are sceptical, says **Simon de Bruxelles**

ADRIAN SHERRATT

Annie Williams, a neighbourhood watch co-ordinator, said: "We had felt like we were under siege. Now I can call the patrol with petty things the police don't have time for"

If you are young, male, wear a baseball cap, drive an old banger or simply walk down the wrong street in one of Bristol's more affluent suburbs, you might as well consider putting on a striped jumper bearing the word burglar.

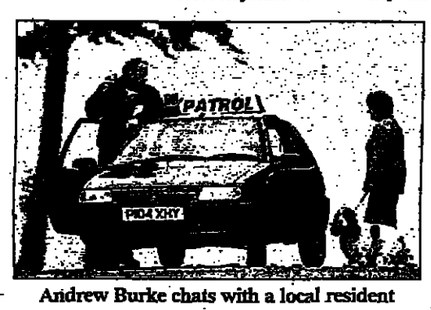
If you are lucky, you might have your car number taken. At worst, you will be confronted by a burly ex-serviceman demanding to know your business. For five years, patrols by a private security company called SAS (Security And Systems — not, of course, to be confused with any other organisation) have been policing the streets of Stoke Bishop, Coombe Dingle and Sneyd Park.

Britain's first and longest-running private police force is constantly vigilant for the young men they call "toe-rags, scrotes and scumbags" on the prowl for anything they can carry off.

The patrols are fighting a battle not just against the criminals but against the scepticism of many police. Senior officers believe the company's existence exacerbates fear of crime, on which its profits depend. But as the ability of the police to curb petty crime comes under challenge, residents of Bristol's greener outposts believe they have a solution. Going private is a route other communities are watching closely. Last month, council tenants in Bradford voted for a 50p levy on their rent for their own community squad. Bristol police will not discuss whether crime rates have fallen, but SAS and residents insist the effect has been dramatic. When Phil, an ex-Royal Marine who saw service in Northern Ireland, arrived in Sneyd Park, it was a battleground. On one side, there were the law-abiding citizens' large houses. On the other, he saw the "social bacteria" who preyed on them. Ram-raiding front doors with stolen cars to steal the television or video was a local speciality. Life isn't like that any more, says Phil. The highlight of his week was the theft of an ornamental bird bath. He is optimistic that he has the number of the culprits' van.

The SAS patrols were started by Andrew Burke after his car was broken into twice and his mother's home was burgled. Mr Burke, 44, was already running a security company employing ex-servicemen when he decided to take action. He said: "We went out on patrol one night and caught two little bastards breaking into a car. We took them to one side and read their futures for them."

Word got back to the residents' association, which was fed up with the increase in crime. The street patrols were born. At first only 160 households signed up. Today there are more than 1,200 paying £1.35 a week for 24-hour patrols by Mr Burke's full-time team of 12. The men wear informal uniforms of shirt, tie and blue blouson jacket. Their cars have a roof sign saying Patrol alongside a flashing light. Faces of local suspects appear on "wanted" posters distributed to members.



Andrew Burke chats with a local resident

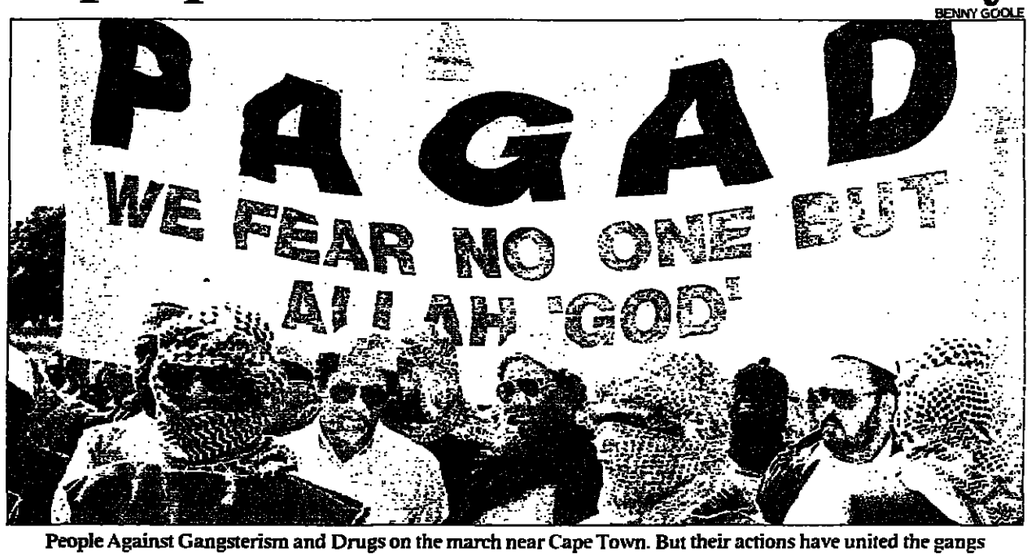
Mr Burke claims burglaries are down 78 per cent, crimes of violence down 80 per cent, car thefts down 92 per cent, vandalism down 100 per cent. The Neighbourhood Watch agrees there has been a big reduction.

Residents of the surrounding council estates resent SAS's accusations that they are responsible for the crimes. Mr Burke said: "I'm not saying everyone who lives in a council estate is a criminal, but nearly all the criminals live on the estates. You can spot them a mile off. They skulk along looking shifty, they have skinhead cuts, they wear scruffy clothes or drive an old banger they haven't registered. You can tell they don't belong. We've had death threats, assaults, but they're cowards at heart." A senior police officer was highly critical of Mr Burke's poster campaign naming "known" criminals, and repeated several times that the police would support private security controls only if the firms were properly regulated and licensed. However, most residents are delighted.

Annie Williams, co-ordinator of the Coombe Dingle neighbourhood watch, said: "Before the patrols started, we felt like we were under siege. If there is a crime, I will call the police first and the patrol second, but I can call the patrol with petty things that the police don't have the time or the resources to deal with."

Where people power has turned to anarchy

FROM SAM KILEY IN CAPE TOWN



BENNY GOOLE

People Against Gangsterism and Drugs on the march near Cape Town. But their actions have united the gangs

CONVERGING on the comfortable middle-class home from two sides, the vigilantes opened fire. At least 300 rounds from pistols, pump-action shotguns and hunting rifles tore into the building in Hout Bay. Three truckloads of South African police watched, but did nothing.

The force is at least 1,000 men short of the number needed to police Cape Town's gangs, who have senior officers on their payrolls: so vigilantes have been allowed to grow out of control. During the Hout Bay attack, on an alleged drug dealer's house, it took at least 50 police in armoured trucks to arrest three vigilantes.

But most sinister of all have been recent warnings from gang experts that one vigilante group has forced rival gangs into an alliance which could soon take over the economic and political life of the Cape.

No one was injured in the Hout Bay shooting. But fighting between the gangs and the Muslim-dominated vigilante group People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (Pagad) has escalated into open war, which has been ignored by the Government.

Cape Town and the Cape Flats, where most Coloured (mixed race) people live, has largely been written off by the ANC as a lost cause.

"The vigilantes have achieved in a month what gang leaders have failed to do over the last four years. Now there is total unity among the gangs," said Irvin Kinnes, founder of Community Anti-Crime Forum for the Western Cape. A former ANC activist, he grew up in the township of Manenburg which is held in the grip of an estimated 100,000 gangsters. Disgusted by the indifference of the Government, he resigned from the ANC earlier this year.

Pagad chalked up its most dramatic kill when it lynched Rashaad Staggie, joint leader of the Hard Livings gang 18 months ago. Since then his twin brother, Rashied, has set up an alliance with the Mongrels, Sexy Boys and the Americans under the umbrella of The Firm.

Divided, the gangs might have been vulnerable to police infiltration. United, they look unstoppable. Rashied Staggie said recently that he was as "close to all-out war with Pagad as I am to my skin".

Pagad's main military branch, G-Force, is widely believed to have been trained overseas by militant Muslims. But, over the past two weeks of hit and counter-hit, the gangs have proved far more efficient killers than their hooded enemies. Most of the Pagad attacks have been on the wrong targets. In the past month several children have been killed in Pagad drive-by shootings.

The group's actions, and those of the police, are playing into Staggie's hands, according to Wilfried Scharf, director of Cape Town University's Institute of Criminology. "A full-scale war would only have one winner — the gangs — and there would be nothing to stop them from taking over. The police and administration have been very slow in seeing that vigilantes will bring only disaster."

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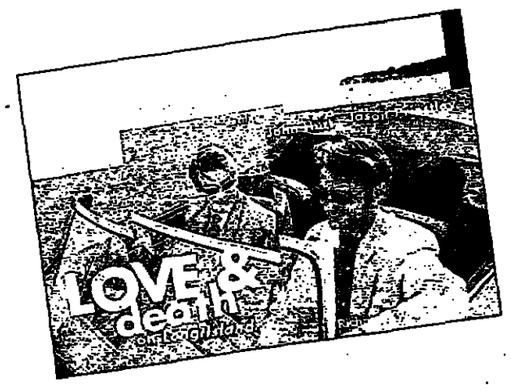
British film: it's a lottery

Movie makers are queuing up for subsidies, says **Dominic Kennedy**



ANDRÉ CAMARA

Stephen Fry in the title role, with Jennifer Ehle as his wife, Constance, in the heavily subsidised *Wilde*

Lottery winners and losers, from the top: Helena Bonham Carter and Sam Neill in *The Revengers' Comedies*; Jon Bon Jovi and Thandie Newton in *The Leading Man*; Kate Beckinsale in *Shooting Fish*

When *Wilde*, a literary romp starring Stephen Fry as Oscar, opens on Friday, it will become the most heavily subsidised British film ever released. Its fate at the box office will also be watched nervously by the entire British film industry.

The film, which portrays the writer as a promiscuous homosexual but also a loving father and husband, was made only because the National Lottery stepped in where big film companies feared to tread with a loan of £1.5 million.

Wilde is spearheading a new generation of subsidised films that owe their existence to an unprecedented outpouring of government generosity. Some £940 million of extra investment will be channelled into film production during the next six years through ministerial initiatives, enough to make 250 sequels to *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

The new money at last gives British producers an opportunity to stop churning out Merchant Ivory nostalgia romps and comedies about the class system. The most keenly awaited lottery film is *Shooting Fish*, which received a £980,000 loan. It is a comedy about confidence tricksters, starring Kate Beckinsale, and has an indie music soundtrack featuring Space and the Bluetones.

Love and Death on Long Island (£750,000) casts John Hurt as an English widower who becomes obsessed with an American teen heart-throb played by Jason Priestley. *Bent* (£560,000) features Mick Jagger as a drag queen and Clive Owen as a gay man thrown into a Nazi concentration camp.

However, there are pitfalls ahead as well as opportunities. The creative spark of the lean, hungry film-maker chasing money in the free market might be dimmed by a new generation of flabby executives addicted to subsidy. The extra money is already leading to higher costs as the limited number of experienced technicians and craftspeople sell their skills to the highest bidder.

Some fear the lottery will repeat the mistakes of the discredited National Film Finance Foundation, created by Harold Wilson in the 1940s, which backed a string of turkeys with government "loans", many of which were never repaid. Margaret Thatcher eventually scrapped the foundation.

Julia Palau's request for a loan was turned down

Government support was revived after Julia Palau, whose J&M Entertainment made *What's Eating Gilbert Grape?* and *Kiss of the Spiderwoman*, joined forces with the broadcaster Barry Norman. "We targeted Virginia Bottomley and took her out to lunch and told her what's what," Mrs Palau said. Mrs Bottomley made film a National Lottery "good cause". By 2001, lottery players will have donated £200 million to it.

Labour's generosity has scaled new heights. Gordon Brown's first Budget included tax breaks to increase annual investment by £240 million. Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, changed Channel 4's finances so that it can spend a further £16 million on making films in 1998 and 1999.

Yet the secrecy and red tape surrounding lottery applications have left film-makers bewildered. When Mrs Palau sought a loan of £890,000 for J&M's *The Leading Man*, a "sexy thriller" starring Jon Bon Jovi in London's theatreland, the claim was rejected. The Arts Council refused to say why and all Mrs Palau had to go on was rumour.

> "We heard that the Arts Council's view was that we would finance The Leading Man anyway, so why give the money to us?"

"We heard that the view was that we would finance it anyway, so why give it to us?" she said. (The company did finance it and the film has just been released, to lukewarm reviews.)

So when J&M backed another film seeking lottery funding, *The Revengers' Comedies*, it advised the producer, Simon Bosanquet, to apply under his own name. The Arts Council began considering a £950,000 loan to Artisan Films Ltd. The "riotous British comedy" stars Helena Bonham Carter alongside Sam Neill and Kristin Scott Thomas.

The civil servants took so long that the stars began to fret. "Helena Bonham Carter was really responsible for keeping the cast together," Mrs Palau said. "She was very helpful in calling the other actors up and keeping them in place. She had a lot to do." Eventually Mr Bosanquet won a loan and the film will be released next year.

Some experts say that British cinema cannot cope with the avalanche of cash. Wendy Palmer, sales agent for *Secrets and Lies*, which delighted critics and made £33 million at the box office, said: "I am a strong believer in market forces deciding what films are made. I don't believe that films have to be overtly commercial. There is plenty of room for more sophisticated movies."

Terry Ilott, author of *My Indecision is Final* about the decline of Goldcrest Films, said: "Why is film a good cause? It's not. Film production is almost quintessentially a venture capital business. The very existence of lottery funding as subsidy removes from the producer a very large part of the consequences of failure."

Tim Adler, deputy editor of *Screen Finance*, said: "Too many films are being made. This is pushing costs up. Daily rates for set riggers and lighting and sound men increase by about 10 per cent each time they move between films."

Two even bigger gambles than *Wilde* are due for release in coming months: an untitled Mike Leigh project and *Swept From The Sea*, based on the Joseph Conrad novel *Amy Foster*. Each was lent £2 million from the lottery.

So far reaction to *Wilde* has ranged from *The Daily Telegraph*, which tipped it for an Oscar, to *The Face*, whose reviewer stated: "There's no passion, no point."

PAYDAY FOR THE BRITISH FILM INDUSTRY

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GREENLIGHT FUND: £10 million of lottery money over two years for six medium-budget films. First announced in 1995

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HELP FROM TAXPAYERS: tax breaks for films expected to increase annual investment by £240 million a year for the next three years, announced in Gordon Brown's Budget 1997

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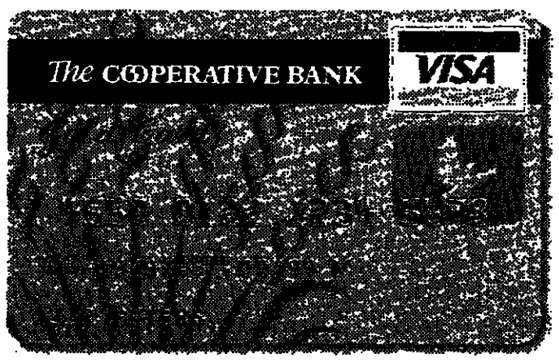

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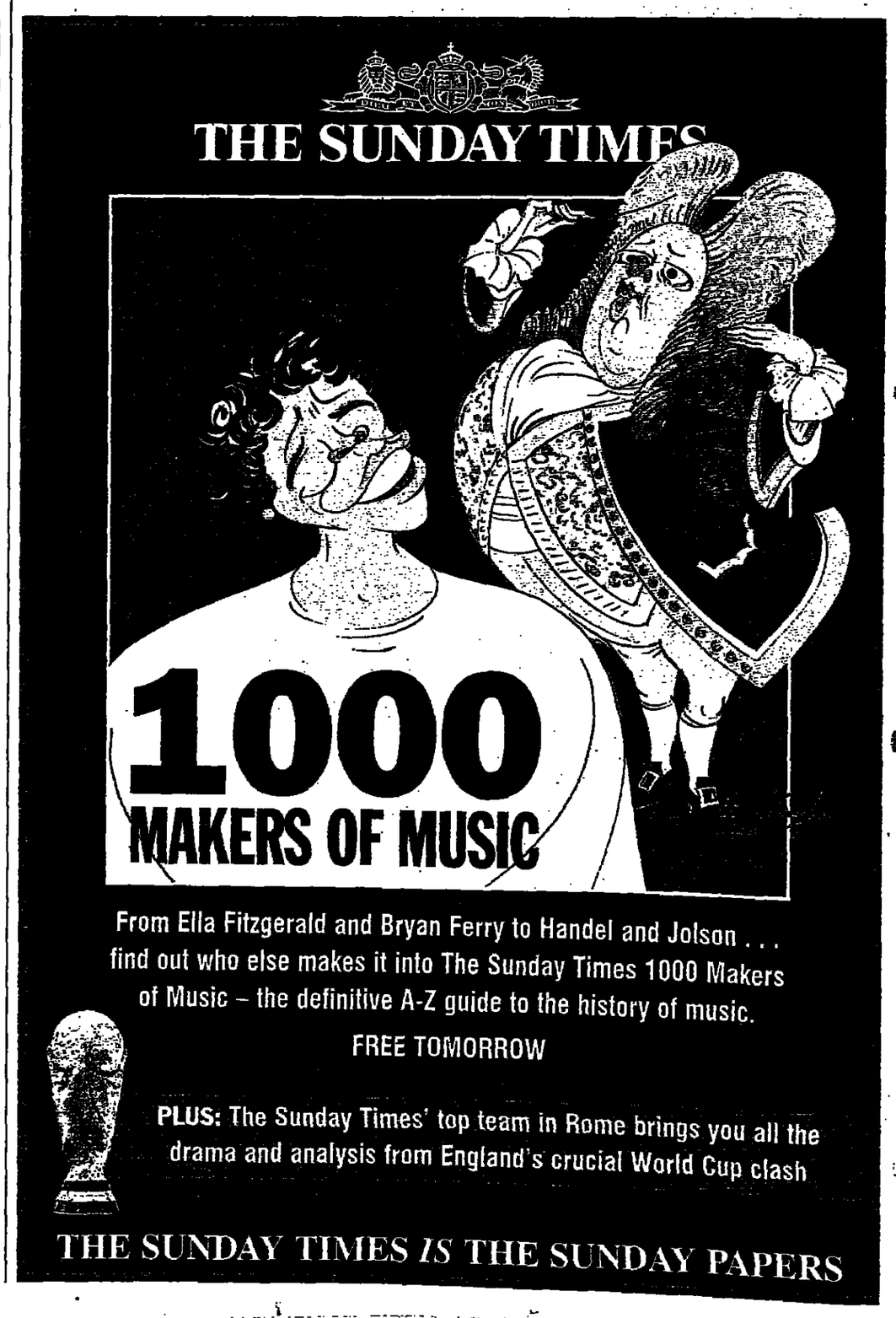


هكذا من الإصل

The model of a modern Queen

PHILIPPE WOJAZER/REUTERS

Queen Noor of Jordan: the student activist at Princeton was an unlikely candidate for royalty

Jordan can boast a woman whose success in a royal role might have been a blueprint for another Princess, had she been luckier

Valerie Grove

When Queen Noor of Jordan arrived at the Savoy for the Women of the Year lunch on Monday, she was surrounded by a frenzy of popping flashbulbs. "Is it like that, wherever you go?" I asked her later. "Absolutely not," she replied. But it was plain to see why it happened. Those cameramen are bereft without their Princess. When a royal blonde, tall and slender and of quite exceptional beauty, hoves into view, they cannot resist.

"Enough! Enough! Go now, all of you!" A formidable luncheon organiser of headmistressy bearing soon had the lensmen cowering.

Queen Noor had come to address 500 high-achieving women with an inspiring speech; and as it happened, to visit one of her sons in the sick bay at his English public school. "Like most working mothers," she said, "I never feel I am doing anything well enough."

Queen Noor, née Lisa Halaby, grew up in Washington and California; her father of Syrian descent, her mother Swedish, hence the direct blue eyes, blonde mane and totally American manner.

When she met King Hussein 20 years ago and became "Light of Hussein" — Noor Al Hassein — Queen of the small Hashemite desert kingdom, she had been working as an architect. Since then she has become the very model of a modern Queen: a statesmanlike figure, airing her views freely across the world. When she gave her first political speech, in Washington in 1982, on the Middle East peace process, the *Washington Post* sent along a Style section reporter who wrote about her clothes: curse of the prominent woman. (Even Madeleine Albright does not escape this treatment: the current *New Yorker* notes that an aide carries her lipstick.) On the other hand, Queen Noor's looks — 5ft 10in, slim and chic — are extremely noticeable; her wit and quick intelligence strike later.

She was an unlikely candidate for Queen. She hadn't the slightest interest in royalty. She was a student activist at Princeton, one of the few women in its first co-ed year, reading architecture and urban planning. She stood on tear-gassed picket lines in anti-Vietnam demos. "But then," she says, "I married an unusual man."

It happened by chance: Lisa was working with Marietta Tree at Llewelyn-Davis, Weeks, the British firm commissioned to replan Tehran. Later, she was in Jordan working on a plan for a pan-Arab aviation university. Uninvited, she accompanied her father (aviation chief in the Kennedy years, and sometime Pan-Am president) to the palace. "One could say that the romance blossomed by chance."

She was 25; King Hussein had lost his third wife in an air crash. They conducted their courtship despite security guards and the gaze of Amman society, by riding off on his BMW motorcycle: "Those were exhilarating moments of freedom, I have to say."

She inherited eight stepchildren and has four of her own, aged 11 to 17: two sons, Hamzah and Hashim, two daughters, Iman and Raiyah. Her sons will follow their father to Sandhurst. The King's younger brother remains Crown Prince, but otherwise "Who knows what destiny will call them to?"

When she made her first political speech, she says fondly, her husband telephoned as she was leaving and said: "I've just realised the position I've put you in. I've taken a Valium." But the anxious King soon realised that he could rely on his wife to deliver on his behalf a forceful message to the Americans.

"Obviously an American audience would listen to me differently from an Arab official. They think of me as one of their own. They identify with me, which gave me a special credibility. When I questioned American policy in the Middle East, it didn't earn me friends within certain political administrations. But I wanted to break down stereotypes and prejudice about the Arab world. I tried to present the too-often hidden human tragedy of the Arab-Israeli conflict. We were not as adept as the pro-Israeli lobby in the US at getting our message across."

In the early days each speech was a mammoth effort. "I would do about 15 drafts: it was like cramming for finals. I was most apprehensive about the Q and As. Especially at the Kennedy Institute at Harvard in the middle of a major Middle East crisis." They asked her what it was like being one of the first girls at Princeton. Answer: "An excellent preparation for living in the Arab world."

Her husband, educated at Harrow and Sandhurst, witnessed at 15 the assassination of his grandfather: a bullet caught him but was deflected by a medal on his tunic. At 17 he succeeded to the throne and has reigned for 46 years. His 12 children, and even more grandchildren, gather regularly: "It's a typical Middle Eastern family." Queen Noor keeps in touch with her American family by e-mail: she finds cyberspace congenial ("people get in touch who I haven't heard from in years") and was proud when http://www.noor.gov.jo was named Website of the Week.

Having taken feminism for granted when growing up ("I've never been an 'isms' person"), she set about improving the lot of Jordanian women through her Noor Al Hussein Foundation. Her pet project, the co-ed Jubilee School, has produced three mathematics and physics wizards, all girls of 17.

Queen Noor's conversation is peppered with "Contrary to Western perceptions ...", "Few Westerners realise ..." She constantly confronts our assumption that all women in Islam are subjugated creatures with covered heads. The Muslim world embraces many societies. As many Jordanian women as men go to university. Levels of literacy and health approach those of the developed world. Women in the labour force have doubled in 20 years, though they lag behind in government and the judiciary, but they have had the vote only since 1974.

Her quality-of-life project has been transforming rural women from unpaid drudges into entrepreneurs, turning their homes into cottage industries of bee-keeping, growing thyme and sage, weaving furniture from banana and palm leaves. She raised her biggest laugh in her Savoy speech when she described one of the new entrepreneurial women's husbands who, "himself unemployed, sits all day watching his wife's prospering weaving business ... He wants to know if we can find him another wife like that."

It is tough being a queen in the modern world: visible, involved and "of the people". She cites role models from Arab history — warrior queens, peacemakers and educators from the 3rd-century Queen Zenobia onwards — and says Islam long preceded the West in granting women status and property rights. She embraced Islam wholeheartedly on marriage, having no religion before, "and I feel it was the right choice. I don't regret it: I only regret the stereotypes, the distortion of its message in the West, caused by contemporary fundamentalist movements which misrepresent the teachings of Islam." She covers her long fair tresses only in religious places.

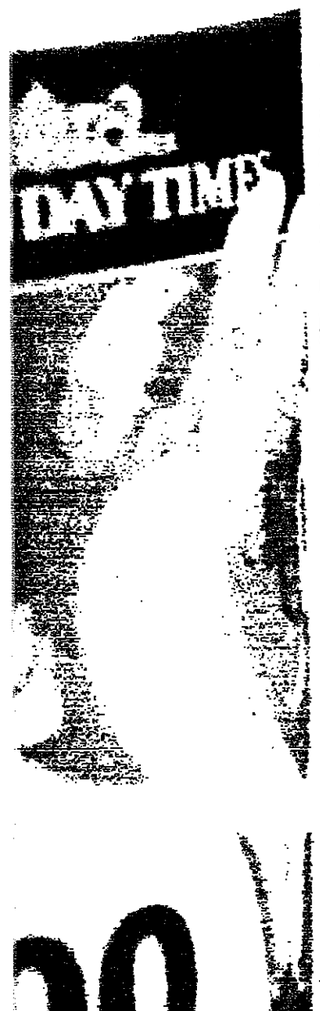
Arabic remains a struggle but she felt she had assimilated into her new life when she started to dream in Arabic. "It's a beautiful, rich, complex language, and the younger you learn it the better." She made a point of having Arabic-speaking helpers and her children are effortlessly bilingual.

Tourism, vital to Israel, Egypt and Jordan, depends utterly on the precarious peace process; every terrorist attack in neighbouring countries affects them all. Jordan, bordered by Iraq, Israel, Syria and Saudi Arabia, is "a peaceful, moderate, clean oasis. Thank God for our stability, which has strengthened us through innumerable crises around us, especially during the Gulf crisis and the ups and downs of the peace process. But our political system is not exclusive of extremist points of view, our elections contested by the full range from Left to Right." Most people in Jordan, she added, feel they're "awfully lucky".

We discussed the confines of royal life: she spoke of the Emperor Hirohito, by inclination a marine biologist, who gave her sea-loving younger son one of his books. ("They're also a family of musicians: I wish I'd been able to persuade my children to carry on with their violin and piano lessons.") Didn't she long to use her architectural degree? It turns out she takes a Prince of Wales-like interest in traditional building styles and, in the seaside town of Aqaba, which was "in danger of being overdeveloped with huge concrete excrescences", has supervised a model for future building in the traditional style, using local natural stone. "It's a constant battle, but we persevere."

She also succeeded the Prince of Wales as president of the United World Colleges. Education is foremost in her projects and programmes, which run to 27 A4 pages. A queen has to be interested in everything. "Well, luckily, I am. And I am blessed with the advantage of the long term, instead of depending on the length of a political administration only."

It is impossible not to think of another potential queen, for whom her friend Noor might have been a blueprint, who was less lucky.



Royal love story with a Hell of an ending

THEATRE

Playhouse

EARLIER this year Edward VIII and Mrs Simpson were the joint stars of a dire West End musical called *Always*. It was billed as the "ultimate love story" and took its title from the imaginary paradise where the Prince and his belle dreamed of spending the rest of their lives. But the action ended in 1937, so we did not see what sort of place it actually was.

Snoo Wilson's outrageously enjoyable, if somewhat static, two-hander provides an answer. Always is the Bahamas in 1943, "a fetid little backwater" where the love story is going decidedly awry. As played by Corin Redgrave, HRH the Governor is a Wodehousean dimwit with a wife whose unscrupulousness would have confounded everi Jeeves. Imagine Bertie Wooster in the clutches of Lady Macbeth, and you have the picture that Corin Redgrave and Amanda Donohoe present.

If the parties were alive they would be suing Wilson and his director, Simon Callow, for millions. The accusation isn't just that, as late as 1943, Edward admired Hitler and still hoped to be ruling a Nazi Britain alongside Queen Wallis. It is that, as Governor of the Bahamas, he transferred huge sums to a German bank in Mexico and tried to pin the murder of Sir Harry Oakes, tycoon and scoundrel, on a man he suspected of having an affair with Wallis.

Redgrave wins a certain sympathy for a chappie who seems a lot happier darning his teddy bear or knitting funny little scarves than attending to the business of the island. If he is morally near-imbecilic, it is partly because pleasing Wallis takes precedence and partly because he has never quite escaped the royal nursery.

The alleged coldness of the Windsors, as represented by a grim George V and a grimmer Queen Mary, is one of Wilson's targets. But an insecure and sometimes violent background seems a poor excuse for Wallis's unequivocal nastiness. She keeps her husband in thrall by playing sexual games, but money matters most.

"You'll be jailed for currency-running or executed for treason, and I'll be left without a penny," she yells at him. With this go-getting monster in effortless command, Always isn't just Government House or the Bahamas. Always is a Strindbergian Hell.

BENEDICT NIGHTINGALE

Simon Callow interview, Metro, page 10

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Gowrie will be the last of his kind

Chairing the Arts Council isn't for amateurs, says **Magnus Linklater**

Wanted: thick-skinned art lover prepared to withstand outraged public opinion, lobby ministers relentlessly, chair high-powered committees with charm and skill, learn to say no firmly but tactfully, handle a budget of some £400 million, and give up three to four days a week for no pay. Not, on the surface, a dream job. But there will, I suspect, be no lack of applicants for the post that Lord Gowrie will vacate next May. The question is whether any of the rich or the retired who reckon they can afford to apply will be able to cope.

Chairing the Arts Council of England these days is no cosy sinecure, no exercise for the gifted amateur, with some agreeable evenings at the opera thrown in. It is, for one thing, hugely demanding, not just in time but in sheer concentration of effort. The steady erosion of government support for the arts has meant that crisis management rather than genial supervision has become almost routine. Defending controversial decisions on the Royal Opera House or the handling of lottery funds, goes hand in hand with long hours spent arguing against cutbacks, or pleading the case for the arts with cash-strapped local authorities.

Lord Gowrie admits that if he has failed, it is over money. Despite lengthy sessions with the previous Chancellor and Prime Minister, he has seen the Treasury extract its pound of flesh and institute cutbacks which the present Government has said it intends to stick with.

"Maybe the next chairman will be more successful," he writes in this week's *New Statesman*. "If she or he is, I shan't be jealous. I'm a good parodist, and I shall write a Baroque ode in the manner of Dryden in their honour." His successor will need more than the Gowrie gift of parody to handle some of the decisions the council is likely to face in the years ahead. What flow from standstill or reduced budgeting are increasingly hard choices on revenue-funded theatres, hard-pressed galleries or companies whose very existence depends on Arts Council support. For some it is no longer a case of death by a thousand cuts, but simply death. And it is the chairman, ultimately, who administers the last rites and explains to the bereaved why it had to happen.

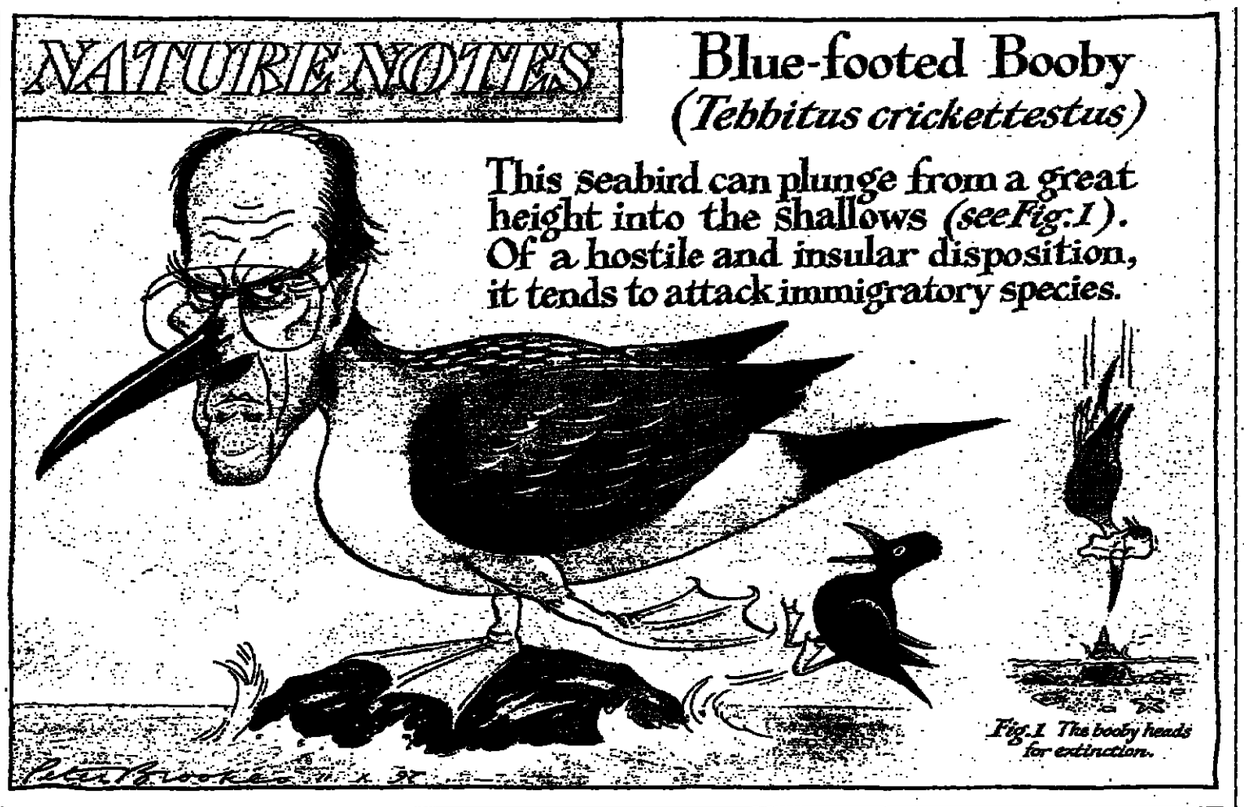
When I took on the job of Chairman of the Scottish Arts Council last year, I was reassured that it would take a modest day or day-and-a-half of my week. Two things threw the prediction out. The first was the National Lottery, which has doubled our funding but also doubled the amount of time required to discuss and handle sensitive decisions. The second was the almost permanent crisis facing the so-called national companies of Scotland — Scottish Opera, Scottish Ballet, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra and the Scottish Chamber Orchestra — all, to a lesser or greater degree, in financial trouble. They became, for me, the equivalent of Lord Gowrie's Covent Garden trauma. When, after many months of agonising deliberation, we reached a point at which the entire board of Scottish Ballet was forced to stand down, all hell broke loose.

I have faced the occasional calumny in my time, but I have never before been labelled (in no particular order): fascist, totalitarian, Stalinist, arrogant, Thatcherite (in Scotland the worst insult of all), elitist, remote, arrogant and unaccountable. That may seem extreme, but when — gluttons for punishment — our council also withheld funding from a much-loved theatre company and refused support for a strongly lobbied film project, they were repeated in spades. The assumption was that we had turned into something akin to serial art killers, pursuing some secret agenda of recrimination.

This, as Lord Gowrie points out, is nothing new. The Arts Council and its bureaucracy is always the first port of abuse, because those who administer the arts in Britain care passionately about what they are doing and react with equal passion when constrained. But things are getting worse. The financial straitjacket is being drawn tighter, the crises are building. With diminishing funds, what confronts us now is a complex and delicate argument about the use of the lottery. It is one that Lord Gowrie has begun to frame: if, he says, the Treasury is to continue to bleed the arts to death, then arts councils must be allowed to use lottery funds the way they want rather than the way they are told to. The danger is that, if the argument is accepted, some future government could cut its grants altogether and use the lottery as a substitute — in effect, gambling with its own culture.

So Lord Gowrie's successor will need deft political skills and the mind of a Machiavelli. He or she will be chosen under the new Nolan rules, and therefore the job will be widely advertised. But with no salary attached, the choice may turn out to be limited. However admirable the concept of chairing public bodies without recompense, the number of those who can afford the time — or companies who can release executives without counting the cost — is limited, and growing smaller. I write as one who is, in fact, paid a fee, and I believe in the end that it is an inevitable process. But I accept that it would mark the end of a noble tradition.

Perhaps the Government should be offered a deal: proper funding for the arts in return for the concept of public service without financial reward. You cannot really have one without the other.



Sitting pretty in Europe

John Lloyd finds Blairism irrelevant to the crisis of the continental corporatists

Staying in Florence this week, I have watched at close quarters the struggle for a certain kind of Europe that has been unfolding in Rome. It is a struggle which is "typically Italian" in the hectic haggling between partners in the coalition which sustained the Government of Professor Romano Prodi; but it is also one which seeks a more decisive break with the Italian postwar tradition of corporatist accommodation. It is a struggle whose outcome will be critical for the future of a more integrated Europe and for European economic and monetary union (EMU) in particular.

Signor Prodi's resignation on Thursday evening, after the week in which he failed to find a compromise with his Communist partners in the coalition, was not the end but merely a staging post in his and others' efforts to turn Italy into a credible, founding member of EMU. It was a challenge to his country as much as to the Opposition; a challenge to support a national consensus on Europe. If, Signor Prodi was saying, a more integrated union is what you want, there is a price to pay. The Communists have so far preferred to destroy the first Government of the Left since the war than to pay it. Over now to the country.

The Italian Prime Minister's travails are shared, in differing ways, by Lionel Jospin of France and Helmut Kohl of Germany. Britain is presently in a protected space. Tony Blair enjoys an amnesty in Britain's Euro-wars — though the spectacle of John Major, cheered in Blackpool for being a gallant loser, will have reminded him that this is a pause in, not an end of, the battle.

It may have reminded him, too, of the causes of his good fortune. He can propose a third way between Thatcherism and Euro-corporatism because new Labour is founded on a decorporatised state. He can refuse a return to "beer and sandwiches" because the main consumers of these delicacies — the trade union leaders — are no longer in a condition to claim them as of right. Margaret Thatcher laid waste the shaky legacies of previous governments' attempts to construct a British version of a social partnership; its debacle in the 1970s is engraved on the collective memories of all parties, and it will not be tried again by this Prime Minister.

Tony Blair tends to be smug about his partners' troubles

His continental counterparts should be so lucky. Caught still in networks of obligation to which no one has taken an axe, they must now seek to accommodate their economies to globalisation through negotiation and compromise within the system and between the social partners.

Germany remains mired in a crisis of unemployment. Earlier this week, the adjusted figures rose to just under five million, or 11.7 per cent. In the eastern *Länder*, a fifth of the workforce is unemployed, and many other jobs there are sustained only by subsidies which the State must now reduce. At the same time, both German and foreign capital shrink from major investments; direct investment remains negative with a net outflow of nearly DM900 million to June of this year. The reason seems simple enough: average hourly wages stand at around £17. In the US, where jobs are plentiful, the average hourly wage is around £10.

Chancellor Kohl has promised to halve unemployment by 2000; the date creeps closer but the trends do not look hopeful. The German budget contains provision for 100,000 fewer unemployed than there are likely to be this year; the extra costs will blow holes in it and further compromise the credibility of the euro in the state which must be its main pillar.

Kohl has a Left opposition in the Social Democrats (SPD), which, though unable to win elections in the past decade, remains powerful, closely linked to trade unions which have retained industrial and political muscle. But the SPD probably has no more big ideas on unemployment than does Kohl's Centre-Right coalition. There is little sense yet that here is an alternative force able to galvanise the country.

The Left does rule in France, and it also gives as yet little sense of a new momentum. Instead, it is being pulled into an enervating round of negotiations in its proposal to cut the working week to 35 hours as a way of fighting unemployment — a proposal which was a firm plank of its campaign in Opposition, and which now faces a united rejection from the Patronat, the employers' federation. That oragnisation's president, Jean Gandois, is a friend and former employer of Martine Aubry, the Employment Minister and number two in the Cabinet; he has, however, assured his members that the friendship comes second to their aim: to torpedo the working week reduction.

Lionel Jospin is stretched on the rack between the bosses and the Communists on whom he relies for his majority, just as Prodi relies on the Italian equivalent for his. Robert Hue, the French CP leader, insists on a law guaranteeing a 35-hour week without a reduction in pay. On the other side of the table, François Mer, the chief executive of the Usinor group, told *Le Monde* this week: "If, to give work to a million people, you threaten the employment of 20 million others, you would have scored something of an own goal."

Thus proceeds the education of the French Left. "The political truth," writes the former Tory MP George Walden in the current issue of *Prospect*, "is that the French are coming to the end of a period in which they enjoyed the best of both worlds, capitalism and collectivism." If this is a political truth — and it seems to be — then it is true beyond France. The globalisation and information explosions have detonated everywhere, privileging not just M Mer's consumers but people like himself — able as he is to brandish the laws of 21st-century global competition in the faces of European politicians walled in by national imperatives which stem from their postwar political settlements.

Tony Blair and new Labour tend to be smug about their continental partners' troubles. The solution, as they see it, is an emulation of the new Labour approach: rising above entanglements and compromises to an articulation of national goals and economic truths, while devolving such messy issues as hours and wages to the actors in the marketplace. Some of this lay behind Mr Blair's hubristic rhetoric at his party conference last week on Britain's "destiny to lead" in Europe — a formulation which seems absurd from a continental perspective while Britain stands aside from the grand project which consumes every other member of the union: EMU.

But Mr Blair is positioned on ground that was cleared in the 1980s. His fellow leaders cannot rise above the systems which both constrain and empower them; nor, even if they could, should they. The institutions of social cohesion to which countries traumatised by dictatorships and war naturally cling are not to be casually brushed aside, even where they must be reformed.

Reform is coming, but not in new Labour guise. Germany is no ailing giant; it has recovered its share of world exports after a dip and is decentralising negotiations on working practices and on wage-setting, especially in the east, to cope with the need for greater flexibility. Jospin has dropped the 35-hour week and is likely to be more attracted to the kind of employment schemes the Patronat would tolerate than to a central command to cut hours, which would be at best temporary in its ameliorative effect.

Prodi, Kohl and Jospin are all in a similar predicament

As for Signor Prodi, the politics he has attempted to champion in the past 18 months hang in the balance. "The Italians," he told his parliament, "do not want to go back to continually shifting coalitions and unstable governments." In that he seems right; the media reacted to his resignation yesterday with acute disappointment that the old, selfish party politics should again dominate.

He may fail. But it seems more likely that the open, purposeful politics he has attempted to ingrain into Italian public life will not pass away in favour of a bout of pointless financial lubrication. He has been successfully tough in reducing the budget deficit by £38 billion and in bringing inflation down to 1.4 per cent. The goal of the Italian political class remains EMU membership, and high costs have already been paid for its realisation. High costs are being paid across the Continent. Britain, relaxed and booming, has paid some of these costs in the past — but faces another bill soon.

The author is associate editor of the New Statesman.

A book of snobs — so what?

Simon Barnes says Anthony Powell's critics miss the point

It is shot through with every snobbery of old Britain. He dwells too much on a narrow, privileged world. He is interested only in the upper classes. It is anathema to the best intellectual circles.

All these words were written in the past few days in pieces largely favourable to *A Dance to the Music of Time*, Anthony Powell's 12-volume *roman-fleuve*. The first of the four two-hour television episodes of the *Dance* was shown on Thursday, to a mixed critical reaction. I enjoyed the thing myself, even if it did remind me a little of Monty Python's "summarise Proust competition".

It is intriguing that Powell still presents a problem, even to his fans. Evelyn Waugh's passionate adoration of the aristocracy is seen — rightly — as an essential aspect of *Brideshead Revisited*. Powell has no such love: he accepts his aristocratic characters matter-of-factly, as people you bump into, people who knock about the world like everybody else.

And that, for some people, is unforgivable. "Unfortunately his *oeuvre* at present is lacking any real sense of social significance," said the left-wing critic J.G. Quiggin. Which says it all, although Quiggin is in fact a character in the *Dance*, here discussing another character.

There is something about Powell's work that brings out the working-class hero who lurks in every middle-class heart, waiting only to meet a genuine patrician to be let loose. Powell's fans can argue, and rightly, that there are very many non-aristocrats in the *Dance* — more than in Shakespeare. But the snobbery is always there: quiet, understated, the more galling for that.

Powell's memoirs are full of genealogies, more fascinating to the author than to his readers. His diaries are full of annoying remarks about wine. There is no more point in defending Powell's snobbery than in defending Kipling's imperialism.

"A novelist writes what he is. That is equally true of authors who deal with medieval romance, or journeys to the Moon." Words of the novelist X Trapnel, which go some way to covering Powell and his social assumptions. Trapnel, although not an aristocrat — decidedly down-at-heel, in fact — is a character in the *Dance*.

Many people dislike Powell because they dislike the world he portrays, and count themselves morally serious beings for doing so. But this is like saying *Ulysses* is a bad book because you have never cared for Dublin. I am a stand-up-and-be-counted whale-saver myself, but I could not get through *Whale Nation*, which shares my views. *Moby Dick*, however, is one of the best things I have ever read. To disapprove of Melville on eco-moral grounds misses both the point and a treat.

To write off Powell for social-political reasons is just as bad. The moral importance of a book does not depend on the political views the author held, any more than it depends on the kind of life he led. X Trapnel, talking of *Satyricon* and dealing prophetically with the question of political correctness in the novel, asks: "Who cares which way Trimalchio voted, or that he was a bit temperamental towards his slaves?"

The fact that people are still uncomfortable about the *Dance* — the last novel was published 22 years ago, the first 42 years ago — is perhaps a sign not of its failings but of its greatness. The best fiction in English since the war? I think so. Never trust the teller, trust the tale.

Panel pinned

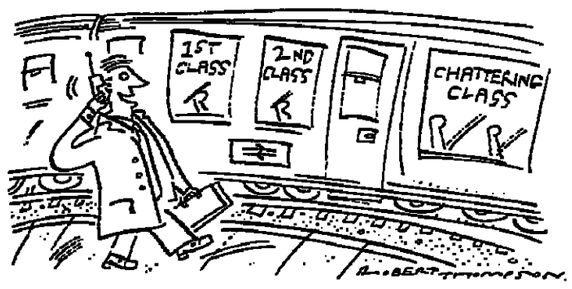
WHY does the Booker Prize always end in controversy? This year, I gather, a dispute has already broken out before the verdict has been delivered. The judges have been banned from attending the party before the awards ceremony next week to prevent them from leaking their decision to other guests (or, worse, the media). They are not happy.

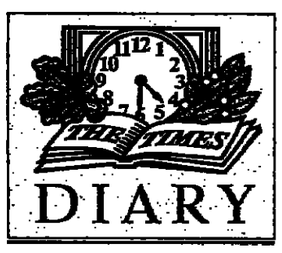
This follows an incident last year when one of the judges, the author A.N. Wilson, apparently unhappy with the panel's decision, is said to have let slip the result.

This year the five judges, including authors Lady Rachel Billington and Dan Jacobson, will be shut in a small room and drip-fed champagne while guests socialise outside. At dinner, the judges will crouch at an isolated table until the chairman announces the winner. It is likely to be awkward, since they are usually on blood-letting terms after hours of bickering.

"We have spent an awful lot of time reading these books and we are now being treated very badly," says one judge. "I feel strongly about this." But Carmen Callil, chairman of last year's prize, has little sympathy: "It's quite right that they should dine separately. They're jolly lucky to get fed at all."

● *BAD news for Chris Patten. Hints that he will slip back into Westminster by inheriting John Major's Huntingdon seat have been ruled out. Before the election, the then PM privately assured his local party that he would serve the full term of this Parliament. He renewed this pledge recently. I also gather that Major has been told, curtly, that even if he were to step down, the seat is not his to hand on a silver salver to Patten. Looks as if the former Governor will have to loiter in France for a bit longer.*





No offence

IT JUST isn't Neil Hamilton's life. The disgraced MP's latest attempt to prove how terribly maligned he is has, er, failed. This one begins with his Tatton election campaign and an advertisement taken in a local paper by Mohamed Al Fayed. It promoted a book entitled *Sleaze*. Funnily enough, Mr Hamilton features in it.

Believing the "offensive" ad undermined his candidature, he complained to the Advertising Standards Authority. The judgment seemed to be swinging Hamilton's way, but then Sir Gordon Downey published his report. The ASA's verdict: "If he had been involved in 'sleaze' and the contents of the book were broadly true, then the complaint was unwarranted."

● *THERE is a bloodthirsty tone to the CV of James Purefoy, trouser interest in the televisual adaptation of Anthony Powell's upper-crust yarn,* A Dance to the Music of Time. *Before hitting drama school, young Purefoy had embarked on a career as a piglet-castrator in Somerset. "I could get through 50 little pigs a day," he recalls. "I'm not squeamish in the least — we grew up next door to an abattoir."*

● **OLD TIMES**
JEFFREY ARCHER'S call for unity surprised some who recall his remarks in 1985: "You wouldn't buy a used car off this Government." To charges of disloyalty he replied: "I'm the senior volunteer in the party, so I can say what I like."

Soppy date

PRINCE EDWARD has taken charge of plans to celebrate his parents' golden wedding anniversary at the Festival Hall in November. His theme? Romance, and the enduring nature of marriage.

"It's all been Edward's idea," says a courtier. It is a "family celebration" for 250 friends including all the Royal Families of Europe, plus 2,700 guests paying £400 a throw. Senior actors will play roles from Shakespeare. Sophie Rhys-Jones, Prince Edward's friend, might be interested to hear that they will act out scenes from *Romeo and Juliet*.

A piglet's nightmare: Purefoy

● *DRAINED after a bumpy conference, William Hague is to recuperate among the beer-and-chips crowd on the Costa Brava. He will be joined by Sebastian Coe, who spent most of last week grumbling that he had not had time to scamper across Blackpool's golden beach. He will meet retired British members of the Conservatives Abroad Group in the resort of Calpe, a mecca for bunkered Thatcherites. Hague will be welcomed on Monday by the Anglophile Mayor, the bracing Javier Maroto, who makes Franco look like a Heathite. And he thought being leader would be fun . . .*

● **NEW TIMES**
THE First Sea Lord, Admiral Sir Jock Slater, has been required to give a urine sample to prove he is not on drugs as part of a clampdown by the Ministry of Defence, which says: "He was negative but he has to be treated like everyone else."

Luvvy to see you: Cameron Mackintosh and chorus girls

PARTY TIME

HOPING to boost his ageing West End musical, *Les Miserables*, Cameron Mackintosh threw a party. So when the curtain fell on Wednesday evening, chorus girls rushed to join Mackintosh and his director, Trevor Nunn, for bubbly and chicken satays in the basement of the Palace Theatre.

Talk turned to *Diana, The Musical*, which Mackintosh, I gathered, might produce. "Someone in California has sent me a script," he said coyly, "but I'm worried that it would be rather bad taste to do it so soon."

Trevor Nunn appeared less reticent. "It's an interesting idea," he admitted. "Some might say we have a duty to bring the tragedy to life. Andrew Lloyd Webber would be perfect to compose it, but it would be too painful for him — he was such a close friend of Diana's. We all were." Hmm . . .

JASPER GERARD

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CHANGE AND THE TORIES

Hague learns the lessons of failure — and success

For the second time in a fortnight, a political leader stood before his party yesterday and told them truths that left them a little bewildered. Tony Blair had already lectured his activists on the hard choices that would face Labour in government. William Hague tried to explain to his supporters why they were out of tune with the country and what they needed to do to win back the trust of the people. Neither audience was entirely happy with the prescription; but for neither is there any alternative.

Mr Hague came to Blackpool as unsure of his activists as they were of him. They have been pleasantly surprised by his confidence, assurance and oratorical skills. To field him on Tuesday straight after John Major was a clever way of reminding the party how lacking in these skills his predecessor had been. Mr Hague is the first party leader since Neil Kinnock who has oratory in his blood.

This week the new young leader began to grow the roots of loyalty that have such a fierce hold in the Conservative Party. He appealed over the heads of his MPs to the activists in the hall, offering them more power and supporting their analysis that it was the parliamentary party that was to blame for the general election defeat. This bond of loyalty should repay him when the members are given a large share of the votes in any future leadership election. MPs may snipe at Mr Hague, but if party members have, as expected, nearly 40 per cent of the votes, he is unlikely to be ousted.

His position has also been buttressed by the fact that his prescription for change — bringing a greater humanity, tolerance and compassion to the Tory party — has been reinforced by Michael Portillo. Had Mr Hague's move been disdained by the Right, he would have opened up a vulnerable flank. As it is, his combination of Euroscepticism and liberal social policies is now sanctified by his main leadership opponent — and creates the potential for the party to begin its climb back to popular esteem.

If some vocal Conservative activists thought this week that defeat was entirely the fault of MPs, others have understood that two other factors were also at work, bad government and harsh rhetoric. The conference audience refused on Tuesday to accept that John Major himself should take some share of the blame. Mr Hague, however, hinted as much, both by apologising — at last — for the debacle of the ERM, and by notably failing to mention his predecessor by name during the entire course of his speech.

Regaining their reputation for competence will, as Labour discovered, be a frustrating process for the Tories. Margaret Thatcher was still reminding voters of Labour's winter of discontent 11 years after the fact; Tony Blair will keep memories of Black Wednesday alive too. But Mr Hague has learnt another lesson from Mr Blair: his only power in Opposition is over his party, and if he reforms the party successfully, and demonstrates leadership over his MPs, he may find a platform for power.

As for abandoning the rhetoric of intolerance and learning the language of compassion, Mr Hague and his colleagues made a start this week. The Tory party's most necessary transformation is to come to terms with the social and cultural changes that their own economic reforms unleashed. It will take time for party members to adjust to the new reality. Some will never do so. But, if Mr Hague's conversion is genuine, and if he continues to preach it, new members will be attracted to the Conservatives. And that, as Mr Blair could tell him, is the necessary start of a process of renewal.

BLOOD ON THE PARQUET

Allegations of conspiracy and counter-conspiracy rock France

France has never been a happy hunting ground for the investigative journalist. One reason that it took so long for the political and financial scandals of the Mitterrand years to emerge, or even for the shameful truths about Vichy to be properly investigated and acknowledged, is France's strong culture of respect for the State and its servants, buttressed by a forbidding array of laws ancient and modern against bringing either into disrepute. Even today, the rare televised interviews with the President are so reverent that, to envious politicians elsewhere, they have the flavour of a royal audience. All polls show that the French like it that way.

Two journalists of the satirical journal *Canard Enchainé* have now ruptured this smooth veneer. In doing so, they have united the entire political class, from President Chirac down, against them and — as France's journalists nervously anticipate — against the media in general. Their sensational book, which without naming names or providing proof accuses two leading French politicians of ordering the security forces to murder a French MP, may well have played foul with the rules of evidence. What is certain is that they have flouted the usual constraints that govern relations between politics and the press.

For M Chirac, this thin volume "threatens French democracy, the rule of law, our liberties and personal dignity". It should do nothing of the kind in a confident democracy, equipped with some of Europe's stiffest libel and privacy laws. He would have been wiser to await the courts' verdict. The political rush to judgment indicates nervousness that true or false, the book directs an unwelcome spotlight on the least salubrious corner of French democracy, the political viper's nest of the Côte d'Azur.

One name, that of Yann Piat, has come to symbolise public disquiet about the mysterious failures of the French judiciary to solve a string of murders and suspicious suicides in the Midi, which have involvement in politics and organised crime as their linking thread. The woman her supporters call Yann d'Arc was a beautiful, fiery right-wing MP publicly sworn to expose the deeply corrupt politics of her native South of France, including suspected links between sales of Defence Ministry land and the Mafia. Since the night in 1994 when she was gunned down by two young thugs who have yet to be brought to trial, her murder has given rise to about as many conspiracy theories as has the assassination of John F. Kennedy.

It is a comment on the deservedly low reputation of the political bosses of the Côte d'Azur that her murder has widely been assumed to have been a contract killing involving both the mafia and prominent politicians. Even so, as our Paris correspondent reports on page 16, it is a giant leap from such speculation to the act of all but naming those responsible, as the book does, as François Léotard, former Defence Minister and Mayor of neighbouring Fréjus and leader of the UDF, and Jean-Claude Gaudin, the powerful Mayor of Marseilles. The two men have rightly challenged the authors in court to produce their evidence — which, they now claim, is available only from an unnamed "deep throat" in the armed services.

What chiefly excites the politicians, however, is not the conspiracy alleged, but the quite different conspiracy theory that the journalists have been put up to this stunt by "secret political cells" out to discredit the Centre-Right in forthcoming regional elections in the South of France. That would probably benefit the National Front. This is the anxiety behind M Chirac's outburst. But the best remedy is a determined public assault, starting with reopening the Piat murder inquiry, on the corruption that imparts to this smoke its damaging whiff of fire.

ROMAN AWAY DAY

In the Colosseum the lions usually came out the winners

Oh, to be in Rome now that Saturday's there! Sunshine is forecast. This late Italian summer is averaging a temperature 10 degrees higher than in London. And Rome has been the favourite destination for English visitors since a Pope flattered the first involuntary tourists from England by declaring them to be not Angles but angels.

For medieval pilgrims and young ladies and gentlemen making their Grand Tour, Rome was either their spiritual or worldly summit, and often both. Two centuries ago Edward Gibbon found the inspiration for his life's work there, as he sat musing amidst the ruins of the Capitol. Rome has always been second or ideal home for the English romantics: "Everyone soon or late comes round by Rome."

And for those English who are lucky enough to be in Rome today, there is so much going on. The 55th Italian Government since the Second World War has collapsed, and intricate negotiations are taking place to cobble together either the 54th or a general election. There is the raising debate about which works of European painting may have to be lost in order to rescue the upper basilica of the Franciscan complex at Assisi. The draughty new styles of Milan Fashion Week have just arrived in the smart shops of the Via Condotti.

And today, as you may have noticed elsewhere in *The Times*, there is also a football match in Rome. Statistically, in the 19 full internationals that England have played against Italy since 1933, each side has won seven times, with five draws. Nostalgically, the last time England won in Italy was in Rome in 1961, the year when the £20 a week wage for professional footballers was abolished and after which Gerry Hitchens and Jimmy Greaves, who scored England's clinching goals, took the golden trail to Italian clubs. Financially, an England win is calculated to earn each player in the squad at least an extra £100,000 in fees and other accessories and perquisites.

Since England's last win in Italy, the game has become a global business and passion. Some of the brightest stars on either side play or have played their football in the opposing country's leagues. Television viewers in England and Italy are familiar with the other country's domestic matches every week. With its improved international image, new football chic has arrived. So the eyes of the world will be on this evening's match between two of the world's most glamorous and expensive teams for a chance to play for the most valuable prize in football. The Roman police will try to make sure that the English football supporters come as close to angels as is humanly possible. And many gentlemen in England, now a-bed, will think themselves accursed they are not in Rome tonight.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Social cohesion in 'multicultural' UK

From Lord Tebbit, CH

Sir, Canon Smith-Cameron (letter, October 9) seeks to uphold the Christian Church as an example of multiculture.

That is odd. Most Christians would feel that the schism between the Greek and Russian Orthodox, the Holy Catholic Church and the Protestant Churches, most notably the Church of England, has weakened Christianity and led to much quarrelling, even bloodshed, where jurisdictions have clashed or overlapped.

I thought that the ecumenical movement was about bringing Christians together to share a common doctrine and liturgy in order to preserve the Christian identity distinct from that of the other great religions.

I am left wondering if the Canon rejoices in the memory of the crusaders holding the borders of Christendom against Islam, or if he is ashamed at the violence and cruelty of the crusades which upheld Christianity.

Yours faithfully,
TEBBIT,
House of Lords.
October 10.

From the Right Reverend Lord Habgood

Sir, "Multicultural" is a weasel word which seems to have at least three meanings.

A multicultural society might be one in which (i) a majority culture tolerates minorities, or (ii) a majority culture welcomes and encourages minorities, or (iii) there is a mixture of cultures existing side by side, with none predominating.

It is doubtful whether a stable society could exist with the third and I cannot think of any country which fits this description. Fear of that can throw a blight on the second, which I suspect is the primary meaning most people have in mind when they welcome multiculturalism. The first looks mean, but may represent a necessary stage through which countries have to pass in coming to terms with actual cultural diversity, as in Northern Ireland.

Unless these meanings are distinguished from one another, no sensible discussion of the subject is possible.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN HABGOOD,
18 The Mount,
Malton, North Yorkshire.
October 9.

From Mr Philip Skelsey

Sir, Writing about Australia four years ago Ferdinand Mount posed the question: "How much common culture is necessary to maintain social cohesion in a multi-ethnic society?" (*The Times Literary Supplement*, August 20, 1993).

Instead of merely reviling Lord Tebbit, his critics should spell out precisely how they would deal with his concerns, which must be shared by very many people. In the new situation which Labour is creating, what exactly are the components of common culture to be? From which ethnic groups are these to be derived and in what proportions?

Yours faithfully,
PHILIP SKELSEY,
32/B Abbey Road, NW8.
October 8.

From the Executive Officer of the Professional Council for Religious Education

Sir, This week, in the national religious education festival, thousands of schools have celebrated the way they can help young people to feel secure in their own beliefs and values, and explore the beliefs and values held by others.

I have been unsuccessful in encouraging the press to write about this (not controversial enough, I'm told), but a few words from Lord Tebbit on his hostility to our multicultural society has yielded acres of coverage.

Perhaps he should go back to school for some up-to-date religious education.

Sincerely,
LAT BLAYLOCK,
Executive Officer,
Professional Council for Religious Education,
Royal Buildings,
Victoria Street, Derby.
October 9.

BA cover-up

From Mr Mike Rainham

Sir, Watching Baroness Thatcher drape the tail of a British Airways model aeroplane with a handkerchief was, perhaps, the most telling moment at the Conservative Party conference (report and photograph, October 10). If ever a spectacle summed up the task facing William Hague, then it was surely this act of self-regarding pomp.

Former prime ministers and presidents of other countries seem happy to observe the unwritten protocols which their status makes necessary, if only for reasons of common sense. Perhaps Baroness Thatcher ought to begin accepting, as others have been forced to do, that, when the curtain falls, it really is time to leave.

Sincerely,
MIKE RAINHAM,
22 High Street,
Sutton Coldfield, West Midlands.
October 10.

Masterpieces of tranquil Norfolk

From Mr Roger Last

Sir, Simon Jenkins's view of Somerset versus Norfolk churches ("Towers built on wool", October 4) is purely subjective. His arguments in favour of Somerset are hardly convincing.

One point in particular he misses is the technical marvel of being able to fashion churches at all from such an unlikely and unmanageable material as flint. The construction of scores of architectural masterpieces from these fragments is nothing short of miraculous. Church-building using stone is relatively easy.

What astonishes me is his description of Norfolk as both gloomy and dull. Gloomy, this dry, sun-drenched county, with its brilliant sharp light? It is telling that the great landscape painters of England came from, and painted, the east. Not for them the obvious appeal of hills and valleys, but a subtler more tranquil beauty of oak tree, cornfield, cottage and unlimited sky.

Norfolk spurns the superficial visitor. But to those who choose to take the time and trouble it yields up its subtle and haunting beauty, a richness that endlessly rewards.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER LAST,
The Mill House,
Corpusty, Norwich, Norfolk.
October 6.

From Mr Andrew Anderson

Sir, There are more than 15,000 parish churches in England and it is invidious to make comparisons. I know an unprepossessing Yorkshire church that has an early 14th-century effigy of a lady which beats anything in Norfolk or Somerset: Suffolk is best for fire engines and roasting spits.

For Simon Jenkins to say, on the Feast of St Francis, that you rarely encounter a living soul in these buildings begs an interesting question. In my experience old churches swarm with creatures, many of them protected species, to the despair of the armies of cleaners which are the Church of England's first line of defence.

It is these people — the ones who give up their Saturday afternoons to polish woodwork and brass, cut the grass in graveyards, sweep floors, change the flowers and wash cassocks and altar linen — who cry out for appreciation.

Yours faithfully,
ANDREW ANDERSON (architect),
1 The Close, Norwich, Norfolk.
October 4.

From Mr A. P. Anderson

Sir, For Mr Jenkins to say that most Norwich churches "are now heartbroken refugees from Norwich's post-war desecration" seems unfair on two counts.

Norwich set an example to others in the way it dealt with its unique collection of ancient churches. The city council purchased the freeholds of most and the Norwich Historic Churches Trust came into being, not to be confused with the later, admirable Norfolk Churches Trust.

Alternative use has not diminished the contribution these buildings make to the city's fabric. As for the so-called desecration, many think that Norwich has done rather well, in spite of loss through wartime bombing, in keeping its medieval street pattern and its marked individuality.

Yours faithfully,
A. P. ANDERSON,
14 Barn Meadow,
Trowse, Norwich, Norfolk.
October 4.

Playgroup closures

From Viscount Falkland

Sir, Can anyone not be deeply concerned about the news that 800 playgroups have closed and that this is likely to increase to more than 2,000 in the foreseeable future (reports, September 29)?

About 800,000 children go to playgroups represented by the Pre-School Early Learning Alliance, and a very high proportion — about a third — of these under-fives are growing up in families where poverty, ill-health and poor housing are the norm. These are the children most at risk from severe deprivation in later life, and the playgroups give a lifeline to them and to their parents, or parent. The danger to our society from these closures is clear.

Cannot the political parties find some true consensus to deal urgently with the threat to these children? The signs are not good: Labour blames the situation on the Conservatives for introducing the nursery voucher scheme, and the Tories blame Labour for allowing the holding of classes in primary schools as a substitute for nursery provision. They are both right of course: but it does not help solve a problem which we ignore at our peril.

Yours truly,
FALKLAND,
House of Lords.
October 8.

Home services

From Dr Serena North

Sir, On the *Today* programme this morning Harriet Harman agreed with the interviewer that an increasing number of experienced childcare workers would be required in order to encourage single mothers back into the workplace.

May I point out that a trained workforce is already in place, whose members work a 24-hour shift, do not take sick leave and rarely go on holiday. They are called mothers (or fathers) at home. Some are able to job-share (parents), others have to do the job single-handed.

Sadly, they are undervalued and hence largely unrewarded for their service to the nation. This is what this Government needs to rectify if it wishes to improve the emotional as well as the physical and spiritual health of the next generation of voters.

Yours faithfully,
SERENA NORTH,
Care (Christian Action Research and Education),
53 Romney Street, SW1.
October 3.

No trade

From Mrs Margaret Pelling

Sir, I read with interest (article, Homes, October 1) of the sixth house move in 13 years planned by City fund manager Nicola Horlick and family. Don't people like this ever find anywhere they can love, want to stay in and call home, and abandon the relentless business of trading up?

By their standards, I suppose my family and I live in a wreck. We've been in it since 1979; our son, now 19, kicked his first football in the back garden, and our 14-year-old daughter was conceived here. The kitchen desperately needs redecorating, but that would mean taking down the pictures and drawings which the kids did when they were little, and they are so fragile by now that we'd never get them up again intact.

Our son still kicks a football about in the garden when he's home from university — those bits, that is, which our daughter has not yet claimed for the rabbit run.

Yours faithfully,
MARGARET PELLING,
36 Oxford Road, Cumnor, Oxford.

Medical risk-takers

From Dr Gordon Manson-Bahr

Sir, The proposed injection of a weakened but live strain of the HIV virus into a dozen healthy people, including Dr Charles Farthing (report, September 29), has parallels in the history of medicine.

My great-grandfather, Sir Patrick Manson, who with Sir Ronald Ross pioneered the discovery of the malaria parasite and the theory of mosquito-borne transmission, did his original work by letting his Chinese gardener, Hinlo, get bitten in his famous mosquito hut in Amoy, China. This important experiment helped to prove the theory of mosquito transmission of diseases.

My father continued in this tradition by injecting one of his friends, a parasitologist who had volunteered to be given the serum of an African bush buck, to prove that this animal was the reservoir of African Trypanosomiasis (sleeping sickness). Both the volunteers survived.

Dr Charles Farthing is to be applauded, and not regarded as lacking in scientific judgment. My great-grandfather was regarded as mad until his research was seen to have influenced the course of tropical medicine.

Yours faithfully,
GORDON MANSON-BAHR,
Boden House, Hall Lane,
Tharston, Norwich, Norfolk.
October 2.

Nuns' retreat

From Mrs John Murray

Sir, It will be dreadfully sad if the delightful San Girolamo hospice — perched just below Fiesole and run by Irish "Blue Nuns" — is forced to close, accused of having become a luxury hotel (report, October 6).

When we stayed there many years ago we slept in a simple cell-like room, ate (usually Irish stew) and prayed communally. The guests were writers at work, serious art students, a few clerics and the like, all revelling as they must today in the peace they found there.

Before leaving England we asked the Mother Superior whether we could bring her anything. "Tins of Bird's Custard and bottles of tomato ketchup," she replied.

No doubt much has changed since then, but difficult to imagine nine nuns aged between 65 and 95 successfully running a luxury hotel.

Yours faithfully,
DIANA MURRAY,
38 Elizabeth Court,
Milmans Street, SW10.
October 6.

Weekend Money letters, page 61

Letters should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be faxed to 0171-782-5046.
e-mail to: *letters@the-times.co.uk*

Picking the bones of Saxon warhorse

From Colonel A. L. Mallinson

Sir, You write (leading article, "Old warhorse", October 8; report and photograph, same day) that scholars will have to rethink their accepted notion of a Saxon warlord riding into battle on a pony and dismounting to fight, because "the Lakenheath horse was huge for its period".

However, after closer examination of the bones, it now appears more likely that the horse was about 14 hands (and therefore a pony) rather than the 16 hands that the USAF veterinary surgeons, unable to make detailed measurements, at first estimated.

Even if the horse were 15 hands, however, it would be significantly bigger than the native British breeds of the 6th century. Yet this in itself would say only so much about the equipage of Saxon mounted warriors.

The Saxons (and the Danes) imported stallions from northern Europe specifically to improve native stock. These would undoubtedly have included coldbloods standing 15 hands, and more, descended from the sturdy Diluvial type which the Goths had domesticated. A warlord would have ridden a stallion, and therefore possibly one of these bigger, foreign breeds. The circumference of the Lakenheath horse's cannon bone should eventually give a better idea of its build and, thereby, its breed.

No stirrups were found in the grave, as you point out, though we cannot entirely discount the possibility of non-metal (leather) ones having decomposed. Realistically, however, it would have been another half-century or so before the stirrups with which the Avars and Huns overran Eastern Europe could have reached these shores, probably via the Franks. And without the stirrup it is difficult to imagine the Saxon warlord fighting from the saddle in a mêlée.

Yours faithfully,
ALLAN MALLINSON,
The Cavalry and Guards Club,
127 Piccadilly, W1.
October 9.

From Mrs Elizabeth Dineley

Sir, How short a time do we have to be buried before it is permissible, even acceptable, for grinning archaeologists to dig out our bones, prod about among our teeth, disperse our possessions, take the head off our horse and lay us, not to rest, in boxes in museums?

How immeasurably touching to see the photograph of the Saxon warrior and his horse. What vandalism, in the name of science, to rend them apart.

Yours faithfully,
ELIZABETH DINELEY,
Woodlands,
Berwick St John, Shaftesbury, Dorset.
October 8.

From His Honour Judge Gabriel Hutton

Sir, If I intended to be buried with my horse I would be saddened to think that we might both be exhumed, at some time in the future, to make way for a new dormitory for American airmen. When does sanctity, afforded to graves, run out?

Yours etc,
GABRIEL HUTTON
(Chairman, The Berkeley Hunt),
Chestal House,
Dursley, Gloucestershire.
October 9.

Not at home

From Mr Michael J. Dyer

Sir, My answering machine has also been accused of telephoning people only to announce that I am out (Mr Trevor Davies's letter, October 7).

While not particularly caring for the infernal machine, I do have to defend its behaviour in these instances, as the calls were initiated by my own absent-mindedness. When finding a called number to be engaged, I had activated the wondrous BT "Ringback" system, which telephones *me* when *they* have put their receiver down.

I then forget all about it and when it rings my dutiful answering machine answers it; this makes the exchange think I have picked up the phone for my automatic connection to the previously engaged party, and the exchange phones them. They then have the pleasure of hearing an ill-informed machine telling them something they did not wish to know.

Bring back the carrier pigeons.

Yours sincerely,
MICHAEL J. DYER,
1 Bradley Gardens,
West Ealing, W13.
October 7.

Flying tackle

From Mr R. S. Smith

Sir, We all know about road rage, but recently I witnessed what appears to be a new departure.

Driving on the M25, I was passing a van (and yes, it was white) whose driver leant out of his window, gave a one-fingered salute and roundly abused the pilot of an airliner which was passing low over us on the approach to Heathrow.

Unfortunately, I was unable to see if the pilot responded.

Yours faithfully,
R. S. SMITH,
21 Winston Close,
Frimley Green, Surrey.
October 8.

هكذا من الإصل

COURT CIRCULAR

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
October 10: The Queen this morning visited Raiwind School, Lahore.

Her Majesty toured the classrooms and met Voluntary Service Overseas volunteers.

The Queen later visited the National College of Arts, Lahore.

Her Majesty viewed some of the galleries and met staff and students.

The Queen afterwards viewed the "Travellers in Time" exhibition at the British Council before attending a Reception.

Her Majesty this afternoon attended a Luncheon given by the Governor of Punjab (Shahid Hamid) at the residence in Lahore.

The Queen and The Duke of Edinburgh later flew to Islamabad, before travelling by road to Murree.

His Royal Highness this morning flew to Chitral and visited a British Aid Project at Bilphok.

The Duke of Edinburgh subsequently attended a short presentation of WWF's work in Chitral at the Governor's Residence, and presented certificates to WWF Conservationists from Chitral.

His Royal Highness this afternoon attended a Luncheon given by the Governor of North-West Frontier Province (Lieutenant General Arif Bangash) at the Residence.

The Duke of Edinburgh afterwards watched a game of Polo, before attending a Reception at the Deputy Commissioner's House, Chitral.

His Royal Highness afterwards visited Chitral Fort.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
October 10: The Duke of York, Patron, this evening attended the Annual Dinner of the Royal Blackheath Golf Club at the Royal Artillery Mess, Woolwich, London SE18.

BUCKINGHAM PALACE
October 10: The Princess Royal this morning departed Gatwick Airport, London, for Austria.

Her Royal Highness, President, Save the Children Fund, this afternoon visited a primary school Volksschule Goldschlagstrasse, Goldschlagstrasse, Vienna.

The Princess Royal this evening attended the Four Hundred and Twenty Fifth Anniversary Gala Performance of the Spanish Riding School in the Winter School of the Imperial Castle, Vienna, followed by Dinner at the Pallavicini Palais.

Mrs Timothy Holderness-Roddam is in attendance.

Today's royal engagements

The Princess Royal, as patron, Minchinhampton Centre for the Elderly, will open a new building at the centre, Windmill Road, Minchinhampton, Stroud, Gloucestershire, at 4.

Award for BT

BT has received an award for its support of people with communication difficulties. Lord Ashley of Stoke, CH, President of the Royal College of Speech and Language Therapists, presented the award at a ceremony yesterday at the Kings Fund in London.

Welsh Livery Guild

The following have been installed as officers of the Welsh Livery Guild for the ensuing year:
Master, Dr David Townsley-Hughes; Senior Warden, Brigadier Ronald E.L. Jenkins; Junior Warden, Mr Grant Walshe; Deputy Master, Mr Thomas A. Owen.

Appointment

Mr Giles Radice, MP, has succeeded Lord Kelvedon as Chairman of the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe.

Dinners

Royal Blackheath Golf Club
The Duke of York, Patron of the Royal Blackheath Golf Club, was a speaker at the annual dinner held last night at the Royal Artillery Mess, Woolwich. Lieutenant-Colonel Richard Pearson, out-going captain, Mr Frank Headicar, incoming captain, Mr Michael Coyle and Mr John Armitage, Captain of Littlestone Golf Club, also spoke.

Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen
The Mayor of Exeter and the Prime Warden of the Blacksmiths' Company were the guests of honour at a dinner of the Incorporation of Weavers, Fullers and Shearmen of Exeter at Tuckers' Hall, Exeter, last night. Mr John Parkin, Master, assisted by the Wardens and Court of Assistants, presided.

Liverpool Consular Corps
The Lord-Lieutenant of Merseyside and the Lord Mayor of Liverpool attended the annual dinner of the Liverpool Consular Corps at Liverpool Town Hall last night, marking the 25th assembly of the Association of Norwegian Consuls in the United Kingdom and Ireland. Consul D. Beazley, president of the corps, welcomed the guests, who included the Ambassadors of Norway, Iceland and Sweden. The Norwegian Ambassador was the host at a reception held earlier.

Weekend birthdays

TODAY: Sir Anthony Beaumont-Dark, former MP, 65; Miss Maria Bueno, tennis player, 58; the Hon Sir Adam Butler, former MP, 66; Sir Bobby Charlton, footballer, 60; Vice-Admiral Sir John Coward, 60; Miss Valerie Cumming, former deputy director, Museum of London, 51; Sir Timothy Daunt, diplomat, 62; Sir Michael Edwardes, former chairman, British Leyland, 67; Mr Tony Evans, Head Master, King's College School, Wimbledon, 52; Miss Dawn French, actress and comedian, 40; Mr Geoffrey Haslam, former chairman, Prudential Corporation, 83; Sir Denys Henderson, former chairman, ICI, 65; Mr Henry King, non-executive chairman, Rentokil Group, 61; Vice-Admiral Sir Ian McIntosh, 78; Mr Alan Pascoe, athlete, 50; Lord Prior, 70; Mr David Rendall, tenor, 49; Dame Paddy Ridsdale, 76; Air Chief Marshal Sir Michael Stear, 59; Lord Tordoff, 69; Mr Thomas Wheare, Headmaster, Bryanston School, 53; Sir Richard Wilson, civil servant, 55; Mr Tony Worthington, MP, 56.

TOMORROW: Professor Juliet Cheetham, sociologist, 58; Dame Elizabeth Chesterton, architect and town planner, 82; Mr Jaroslav Drobny, tennis player, 76; Mr Kenneth Griffith, actor, writer and documentary film-maker, 76; Mr Robert Heron, former director, The Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme, 70; Mr Jonathan Holborow, Editor, *The Mail on Sunday*, 54; Mr Magnus Magnusson, broadcaster, 68; Dr John Moffatt, former Provost, The Queen's College, Oxford, 75; Mr Rick Parfitt, rock singer and guitarist, 49; Vice-Admiral Sir John Parker, 82; Mr Luciano Pavarotti, tenor, 62; Miss Angela Rippon, broadcaster, 53; Mr David Threlfall, actor, 44; Mr Michael Verey, merchant banker, 85; Sir David White, chairman, Nottingham Health Authority, 68.

The Royal Free Hospital

The 15th triennial dinner of the Royal Free Hospital School of Medicine and Old Students' Association will take place on Wednesday, November 19. The annual clinical meeting will take place on Thursday, November 20. For further details and application form please contact: the Postgraduate Administrator, tel: 0171 794 0500 ext 4261, fax: 0171 830 2167. PGEA approved.

Old Millhillians

The Old Millhillians North West Area Dinner will be held at St James's Club, St James's House, Charlotte Street, Manchester, on Friday, November 7, 1997. The principal speaker will be Bill Skinner, our new President. Old Millhillians wishing to attend should contact: Peter Huston, tel: 0161 941 1318 (H) or 0161 872 3889 (B) for more information.

MARTIN RICKETT

Archie Holmes, of Benenden, Kent, and Rachel Coles, of Hambrook, Bristol, who have recently announced their engagement

Memorial services

Sir John Wraight
The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs was represented by Sir John Birch and the Permanent Under-Secretary of State and Head of the Diplomatic Service by Mr John de Fonblanque at a service of thanksgiving for the life and work of Sir John Wraight, former diplomat, held yesterday in the Chapel of St Michael and St George, St Paul's Cathedral.

The Archdeacon of London, canon in residence, officiated, assisted by the Rev John Paul, sacrist. Sir Curtis Keeble read the lesson and Mr Roger Pincham read from the *St George's Day Address* by Mr Enoch Powell.

The Right Rev John Satterthwaite gave an address and Captain Bill Palmer and Mr James Reeve paid tribute.

The Ambassador of Switzerland, accompanied by Herr Robert Reich, attended. Among others present were:

Lady Wraight (widow); Sir Ronald and Lady Arculus, Dame Gillian Brown, Sir Timothy Garden (Royal Institute of International Affairs), Sir Reginald Hibbert, Lady Keeble.

Mrs Rose Damiral-White (representing the Chief Scout) with Mr Bill Cockcroft (Chief Commissioner for England, Scout Association), Mr John Berrisford (World Scout Committee Honours and Awards Board), Mr Roger Hurrion (County Commissioner) and other representatives of the Scout Association, Greater London and the South West).

Mr David Beattie, Mr and Mrs Bryce Cottrell, Mr Andrew Palmer, Mr D S Paravicini (Anglo-Swiss Society), Mr Peter Parker and many other friends and former colleagues.

Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Bashford
A service of thanksgiving for the life of Lieutenant-Colonel R.B. Bashford, former Director of Music, Grenadier Guards, was held yesterday at the Guards Chapel, Wellington Barracks. The Rev Leslie Bryan, Chaplain to the Household Division, officiated. Lieutenant-Colonel Conway Seymour read the lesson and Major-General Evelyn Webb-Carter read from the works of John Donne. Major Peter Lewis gave an address.

During the service the music of Colonel Bashford, Vaughan Williams, Bach, Purcell, Elgar, Grainger, Stanford, and Greig and Fauré arranged by Colonel Bashford was played by the band of the Grenadier Guards and the Trumpeters of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall.

Dr David Grant

A memorial service for Dr David Grant, consultant paediatric endocrinologist at Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children, will be held in the Kennedy Lecture Theatre, Wellcome Trust Building, Institute of Child Health, Guilford Street, London, WC1, at 4.00pm on Tuesday, November 25, 1997. All are welcome.

Forthcoming marriages

Mr J.A.D. Bates and Miss F.M. MacDermott
The engagement is announced between Adam, only son of Mr and Mrs Christopher Bates, of Clifton Hampden, Oxford, and Fabia, younger daughter of Mr Alasdair MacDermott, of the British Embassy, Ankara, and Mrs Roger Flint, of Powerstock, Dorset.

Mr P.G.D. Bingham and Miss R.E. Claridge
The engagement is announced between Patrick, youngest son of Mr and Mrs Stephen Bingham, of Stamford, Lincolnshire, and Ruth, youngest daughter of Mr Richard Claridge, of Bedford, and Mrs Freda Dunlop, of Bedford.

Mr J. Elvin and Miss C. Brown
The engagement is announced between Jonathan, younger son of Mr and Mrs Simon Elvin, of Cookham Dean, Berkshire, and Christy, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Michael Brown, of Langtoft, Peterborough.

Mr K.A. Froggatt and Miss A.F. Packer
The engagement is announced between Keith, youngest son of Sir Peter and Lady Froggatt, of Belfast, Northern Ireland, and Alison Frances, daughter of Professor and Mrs Ken Packer, of Bunny, Nottingham.

Mr D.T.G. Jones and Miss A.C.D. Campbell
The engagement is announced between David, elder son of Mr and Mrs Ronald Jones, of Rock, Cornwall, and Alexandra, daughter of Mr and Mrs Stuart Campbell, of Cookham, Berkshire.

Mr J.M. King and Miss S. Cobbold
The engagement is announced between John, son of Mr and Mrs Michael King, of Perth, Australia, and Susannah, daughter of Mr Nicholas Cobbold, of Calne, Wiltshire, and of Lady Brooke, of London SW3.

Mr M.R. Lindsay-Smith and Miss S.E. Hackney
The engagement is announced between Mark, only son of Mrs Teresa Lindsay-Smith, of North Hykeham, Lincoln, and Suzanne, daughter of Mr and Mrs Jack Hackney, of North Hykeham, Lincoln.

Mr J.W. McVicker and Miss V.L. Bignolas
The engagement is announced between James, son of Dr and Mrs James McVicker, of Ballymoney, Northern Ireland, and Valerie, daughter of Mr and Mrs Manuel Bignolas, of Paris, France.

Mr J.K. Scott and Miss J.C. Rufner
The engagement is announced between Jonathan, eldest son of Mr and Mrs Michael Scott, of Oxshott, Surrey, and Jill, elder daughter of Mr and Mrs Bruce Rufner, of New Jersey, USA.

Mr D.C. Smith and Miss C.J. Davies
The engagement is announced between Duncan Charles, son of the Rev and Mrs Anthony Smith, of Northfleet, Kent, formerly of Matfield, Kent, and Christine Jane, daughter of Mr and Mrs John Ffrancon Davies, of Ascot, Berkshire.

Mr S.R. White and Dr H.L. Willard
The engagement is announced between Stephen, elder son of Mr and Mrs Ron White, of Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire, and Hilary, younger daughter of Mr and Mrs David Willard, of Worthing, West Sussex.

Marriage

Mr A.K.L. Black and Mrs S.M. Miller
The marriage took place on Friday, October 3, in Guildford Cathedral, between Mr Alastair Black and Mrs Susan Mary Miller. The Dean, the Very Rev Alexander Wedderspoon, officiated.

Anniversaries

Today
BIRTHS: John Thadeus Delane, Editor of *The Times* 1841-77, London, 1817; Sir George Williams, founder of the YMCA, Dulverton, Somerset, 1821; Henry John Heinz, food manufacturer, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, 1844; Sir Bernard Partridge, artist and cartoonist, London, 1861; François Mauriac, novelist, Nobel laureate 1952, Bordeaux, 1885.

DEATHS: James Joule, physicist, Sale, Cheshire, 1889; Anton Bruckner, composer, Vienna, 1896; Henry Broadhurst, trade unionist, Cromer, 1911; Jean Fabre, entomologist, Serignan-du-Comtat, 1915; Maurice Vlaminck, painter, Rueil-la-Gadelière, 1958; Chico Marx, actor, Hollywood, 1961; Jean Cocteau, poet, painter, actor and film director, Milly-la-Fôret, 1963; Edith Piaf, singer, Paris, 1963; Stanley Morison, typographer and historian of *The Times*, London, 1967.

The Great Fire of Chicago was extinguished, 1871.

The first in-flight meals were served on a Handley-Page flight from London to Paris at a cost of 3 shillings (15 pence), 1919.

Tomorrow
BIRTHS: Ralph Vaughan Williams, composer, Ampney, Gloucestershire, 1872; Christopher Dawson, historian, Hay-on-Wye, 1889; James McAuley, poet, Lakemba, New South Wales, 1917.

DEATHS: Elizabeth Fry, Quaker, prison reformer, Ramsgate, 1845; Robert Stephenson, civil engineer, London, 1869; Tom Mix, film actor, 1940; Sir Ian Hamilton, general, London, 1947; Sonja Henie, world skating champion and film actress, died in an air crash en route to Oslo from Paris, 1969; Gene Vincent, singer, 1971.

Christopher Columbus landed on Guanahani (San Salvador), 1492.

The Boer War began, 1899.

Edith Cavell, nurse, was executed by the Germans for helping Allied prisoners to escape, Brussels, 1915.

Service dinners

The Green Howards
Brigadier Richard Dannatt presided at the annual officers' dinner of The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment) held last night at the Infantry Training Centre, Catterick.

The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment
Major-General Robin Grist, Colonel of The Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Regiment, presided at the annual regimental dinner held last night at the Royal Logistic Corps, Deepcut.

Ordnance Board
Lieutenant-General E.F.G. Burton, Deputy Chief of the Defence Staff (Systems) was the guest of honour at the annual dinner of the Ordnance Board Officers' Mess held last night in Bristol. Air Vice-Marshal P.J. O'Reilly, President of the Ordnace Board, presided.

71st Yeomanry Signal Regiment
The Earl and Countess of Limerick received the guests at the annual ladies dinner of the 71st Yeomanry Signal Regiment Officers' Dining Club held last night at the Inns of Court and City Yeomanry, on the return of the regiment from annual camp in Belgium. Lieutenant-Colonel R.K. Wilkinson, his officers and their ladies, Contessa Gabriella Penturo and Colonel and Mrs R.M. Yolland were among those present.

Middlesex Yeomanry Association
Major-General D.R. Horsfield was the guest of honour at the annual dinner of the Middlesex Yeomanry Association held last night at the Duke of York's Headquarters, marking the bicentenary of the raising of the Uxbridge Yeomanry Cavalry. Mr G.L. Key presided. Lieutenant-Colonel S.R. Beazley and Major P.N. Willmott, Royal Signals, also spoke.

Details of tomorrow's church services are on page 16 of the Weekend section.

Joe Bugner, "the golden boy" of British boxing

Bugner regains title with eighth-round knockout

By Neil Allen
Boxing Correspondent

The welcome sound of cheers, rather than boos, at last greeted Joe Bugner when he regained the European heavyweight title by knocking out Jurgen Blin, of West Germany, in the eighth round at the Albert Hall, London, last night.

It was only the third clean knockout gained by Bugner in 45 professional contests and just the second time that Blin has been knocked out in his eight years' career. The other man to cause the full count to be tolled over Blin was Muhammad Ali who took seven rounds.

It was a left and right to the head that sent Blin crashing down early in the eighth round. The German squatted near his own corner with eyes blurred and filled with pain as his seconds shouted desperately at him. Somehow he staggered up to a half-standing position as the Italian referee reached "nine". But then Blin went jolting back on his heels, quite unable to defend himself, and the referee correctly ruled a knockout.

Now the crowd which has so often booed Bugner in and out of the Albert Hall ring changed their tune completely. "Bugner, Bugner", they chanted delightedly and the 22-year-old, who has often laboured so disappointingly under the label of "the golden boy", was able at last to lift his arms proudly in response. Bugner, considering the sporting way he has taken so much criticism, thoroughly deserved his moment of triumph.

Bugner had come excitingly close to a first-round victory. After the two men had come out of a flurry at close quarters, Bugner had jumped forward with uncharacteristic decision and lashed out a right and left which sent Blin thumping down on his back. The German had risen at the count of two but still had to take a compulsory count of eight as the crowd roared their delight.

For the next four rounds Bugner dominated the contest, though there were moments when he forsook his trusty left jab and started to flap away with badly timed attacks to the head. Bugner raised the pace in the sixth by shortening the left jab so that, instead of whistling over Blin's shoulder, it began to smack soundly into the German's face.

The seventh was slower and Bugner seemed to lack leverage in his counters as Blin tried more cavalry charges. But though I did hear one or two murmurs of the old sourness from the crowd at that stage, all was forgiven in the next round when Bugner shocked and delighted them with his knockout success.

ON THIS DAY

October 11, 1972

Joe Bugner, British heavyweight boxing champion, 1971-76, lacked the aggression of a really great champion. But he was a popular figure, fighting bravely against Muhammad Ali and Joe Frazier.

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BIRTHS

ADESON - On October 3rd at The Portland Hospital, to Linda and Kevin, a daughter, Grace Lillian, a sister for Graham.

ELLIS - On October 3rd, to Charlotte (née Lane Fox) and Bruce, a daughter, Tabitha Hope, a sister for Matilda.

FARROW - Carol and Jerome are proud to announce the arrival of George Henry, a brother for William, born on 1st October at Farnborough Hospital.

GAMGULI - On 23rd September in Tábor, to Sabina (née Mayer) and Ranjan, a son, Joshua Michael, a brother for Anghamad.

HAMPSON - On 9th October 1997, to Lulu (née Buckley) and Andrew, another beautiful daughter, Arabella Felicienne (Ella), a sister for Rosie and Camilla - Deo Gratias.

JOHNSEN - On September 28th at The Portland Hospital, to Ina-Janine and Lars, a daughter, Ella Frederika.

LUCIE-SMITH - See Port.

MASSARA - Alison and Paul thank God for the safe arrival of Sophie Claire on Wednesday 8th October, a sister for Josephine.

MILES - On October 8th at The Portland Hospital, to Geraldine and John, a daughter, Rebecca Olivia, a sister for Connor.

PORT - On 10th October 1997, to Sue (née Lucie-Smith) and Andrew, a son, James.

POST - On October 7th at The Portland Hospital Anne Claire is geboren! dochter van Jan-Evert en Nienke Post - Oldenberg.

BIRTHS

REDHEAD - On 5th September, to Alexander and Karen (née Heale), a beautiful daughter, Emily Charlotte Gonne, a sister for Arthur and granddaughter for Michael and Jennifer, and Jim and Verlie.

ROBERTSON - On October 9th 1997 in Jersey, to Siobhán (née Kennedy) and Fraser, a daughter, Kinvara Siobhán Iona.

DIAMOND ANNIVERSARIES

COTTON:CONNORS - On October 12th 1937, at St Peter's, Campbellpur, Punjab by Father Alfred Bull, John to Mary. Now at Lansing House, Hartley Wintney, Hants. With love, admiration and gratitude for being such wonderful parents, grand and great-grandparents.

DEATHS

DE ST.CROIX - Sandra Rhoda May (formerly Rabagliati, née Bourgain). Peacefully on 6th October at The Quinta Nursing Home, Bentley. Beloved mother of Paul and stepmother of John and Tim. Much loved by her grandchildren and her sister Mary and a good friend to many in Guildford and Farnham. Funeral at Guildford Crematorium Thursday 16th October 11.30 am. Family flowers only, donations to ATD Fourth World c/o H.C. Patrick & Co. 01252-714884.

DEATHS

FOLKES - Ann Margaret suddenly on October 9th in hospital. Devoted wife of the late Paul Folkes, beloved mother of Simon, Richard, Sarah and Patrick and adored grandmother of Katie, Isobel, Edward, Jemima, Zoë, Robert and Joshua. She will be greatly missed by her family and friends. Private cremation. Service of Thanksgiving to be held at a later date. Donations if desired to Christian Aid, Lower Marsh Street, London SE1.

HARRISON - On October 9th Revd Canon Gordon, aged 84, Upton Scudamore, Warminster, sometime Vicar of St James, Gerrards Cross. Devoted servant of Christ, greatly beloved husband and partner of the late Joan, adored father of Susan and Jane, much loved father-in-law of Francis and Tony, dear grandfather of Andrew, Stephen, Gavin, Susanna and Joanna, fond great-grandfather of Thomas, Harry and Francesca. Funeral Service Tuesday 14th October 2 pm, St Marys, Upton Scudamore. Service of Thanksgiving, Saturday 15th November 2 pm, St James, Gerrards Cross. Family flowers only, donations, if desired, CMS Sudan, c/o W. Adlam & Son, 68/70 Locks Hill, Frome, Somerset BA11 1NH.

KERR - On 9th October 1997 Donald Frederick Kerr C.V.O. O.B.E., husband of the late Elizabeth, father of David, Robert and Joan, grandfather of Julie, Deborah, James, Esther, Elizabeth, Samuel and Mary. Great-grandfather of Rebecca. Partner of Sylvia. Kingston Crematorium, Tuesday 14th October at 12.20 pm. Family flowers only. Donations to Royal National Institute for the Blind.

MILES - Christine (née Rhodes), peacefully at home 3rd October. Funeral held quietly at St Mary's, West Kington 9th October. Donations to Cavalier King Charles Rescue, Tessa, Mrs Hawkins, 7A Friern Gardens, Wickford, SS12 0HA.

SHAND - Eileen Nancy, peacefully on October 9th, at home, aged 90. Beloved wife of the late Dr. Bill Shand. Much loved mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. Funeral Service at Markeaton Crematorium, Derby, on Friday 17th October at 2.15pm. Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, to the Sue Ryder Palliative Care Home, Staunton Harold, Ashby de la Zouch, Leics. LE65 1RT.

SOCKETT - Ernest of Marsa by Sea and formerly of Newcastle. Teacher and historian. Peacefully after a brief illness on 4th October. Beloved husband and father. Funeral took place on 9th October. Donations if desired to RAF Benevolent Fund. R.I.P.

SOUTHCOTT - Wilfred John (Bill) on October 8th, peacefully in hospital aged 76. Deeply missed by his wife Amanda and sons Christopher, Barry, Anthony and their families. Funeral at Mortlake Crematorium on Friday October 17th at 2.30pm. Flowers to Funeral Directors T.H. Sanders and Sons, 28-30 Kew Road, Richmond, Surrey. Donations, if desired, to Kingwood Unit, Queen Mary's University Hospital, Roehampton Lane, London SW15 5PN.

STANNING - Captain Geoffrey Heaton Stanning, D.S.O., Royal Navy, died peacefully in hospital on 9th October; beloved husband of Mary, brother of Joan, father of Elizabeth, Rosemary and John. Funeral at St John the Baptist Church, Mildenhall, near Marlborough, at 11 am on Thursday 16th October. Family flowers; donations if desired to League of Friends of Savernake Hospital, c/o Barclays Bank, Marlborough. Memorial service later.

WAILES - Enid on October 8th 1997 peacefully at Burnham Lodge Nursing Home, Bucks., aged 90 years. Wife of the late Rex Wailes, dearly loved mother of Ursula and Anthea, grandmother of Andrew, Christian, James, Joanna and Antonia and aunt of Jennifer and Kerrin. Funeral Service Holy Trinity Church, Penn, Bucks. at 3 pm followed by committal at Chilterns Crematorium, Amersham, Friday 24th October. Donations if desired to The Musician's Benevolent Fund. All enquiries to G. Smith Funeral Directors, tel: (01628) 523564.

WAKE - Lilian, wife of the late William, passed away October 8th 1997 at home. Funeral Service at Croydon Unitarian Church, Thursday October 16th 2 pm.

WARD - Lt. Col. David Charles Robert Ward K.O.S.B., died suddenly but peacefully on October 8th. Husband of Mary, father of Caroline, Angus, Amelia and Georgia. Grandfather of Charlie, Hamish, Archie, Hannah and Evangeline. Much loved and greatly missed. He asked for a private cremation with no flowers or letters of sympathy to the family. A Memorial Service will be held on Friday October 17th at 2 pm at Berwick-upon-Tweed Parish Church. Everyone is most welcome. No flowers. Donations will be taken at the service and given to SSAFA Forces Help and Berwick Parish Church.

THANKSGIVING SERVICES

DARSON - A Service of Thanksgiving for the life of Michael Barry Darson will be held at St. John's Church, High Road, Buckhurst Hill, at 1.30 pm on Thursday 6th November 1997.

IN MEMORIAM — PRIVATE

HYDE - Yvette Mayeni. Treasured memories of a loved and loving wife, daughter and friend, who died 11th October 1993, aged 38. RIP. From her husband Larry.

McARDELL - Ian Patrick died 12th October 1992 aged 29. Deeply loved son. Sadly missed but forever with us. Mum, Dad, Kevin, family and friends.

TATMALL - Sidney George. Centenary. Still remembered and much loved.

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OBITUARIES

J. G. LINKS

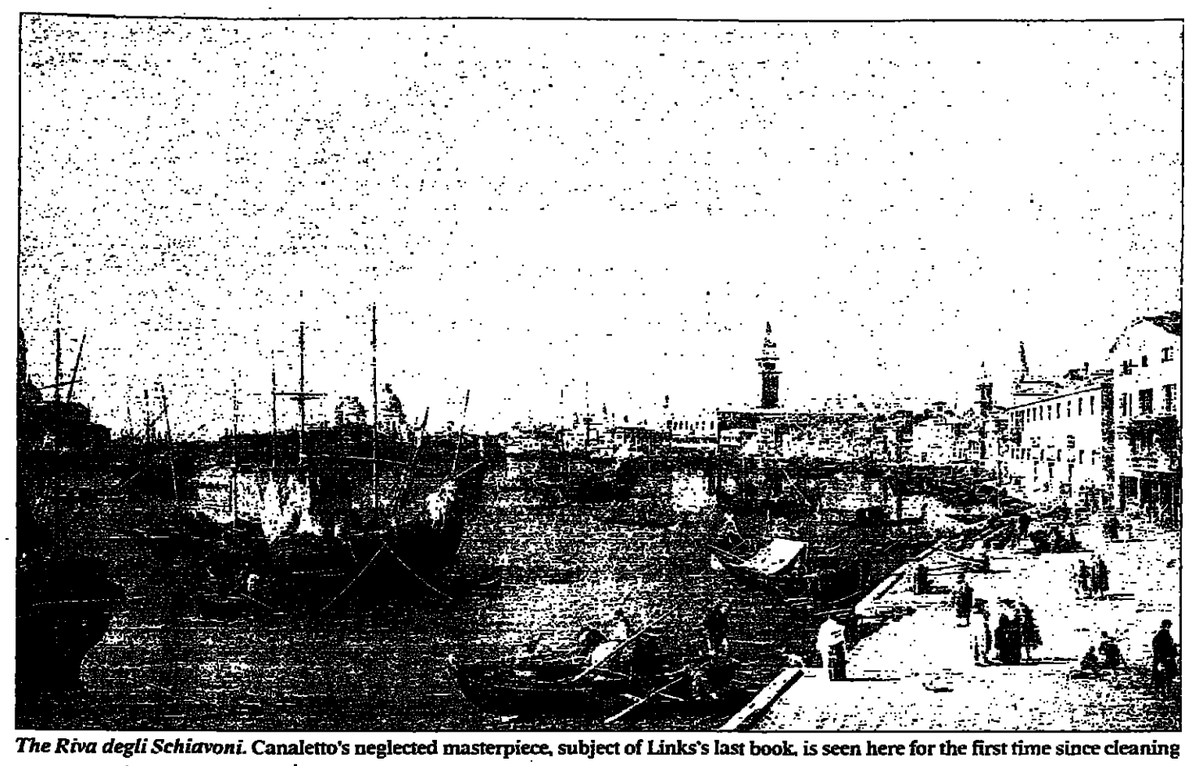
J. G. Links, furrier and expert on Venice and Canaletto, died on October 1 aged 92. He was born on December 13, 1904.

Pre-eminence in utterly disparate fields was masked in J. G. Links by a never-failing modesty and geniality. His first career, forced on him by circumstance, was as a furrier; he retired from fur to become, by accident, one of the world's most respected art historians; and he wrote what has often been described, by Bernard Levin among many others, as the greatest guidebook to any city ever written, *Venice for Pleasure*. In between he was a regular on the Cresta Run, and with Dennis Wheatley he produced detective novels that thrust Wheatley to the forefront of popular writing.

Joseph Gluckstein Links, known as Joe, was born in North London, the son of a Jewish refugee from Hungary who had a fairly prosperous fur business specialising in skunk skins — the lower end of the market. His mother died in childbirth when Joe was 12, and two years later his father had leukaemia diagnosed. As a result, he was removed from Mill Hill School to study the trade. "I was an unwilling and sullen pupil," he wrote, but after his father's death five years later he was obliged to take the business seriously, in order to support himself and his two sisters.

There were compensations, however: unlike his contemporaries who had to marry, often unhappily, to escape the pressures of the Jewish home, Links found himself leading a very agreeable life, with his own business, a handsome house in Hampstead and two sisters looking after him.

He learnt to love fast cars and boats, and holidayed frequently in the South of France, the Alps and New York, always travelling in style at the insistence, so he said, of the firm. For by now he had made himself one of the leading furriers in Britain, and this career was eventually crowned by the Royal Warrant and the medieval post of Furrier to the Queen. His first book was *The Book of Fur*, full of wit and his unfailing sense of enjoyment, and still unsurpassed. It was also as a furrier that Links achieved the rare distinction — and here his modesty sometimes failed him — of being interviewed on television *before* the war.



The Riva degli Schiavoni. Canaletto's neglected masterpiece, subject of Links's last book, is seen here for the first time since cleaning

To this day many furriers remember Joe Links of Calman Links, but are unaware of his other careers. A taste for fine German wine led him in the Thirties to Dennis Wheatley, then an unsuccessful wine dealer. The friendship was sealed one evening when Links, no doubt under the influence of Wheatley's stock, argued that detective novels, though superior to adventure novels, at which Wheatley was beginning to make a modest name, suffered from an excess of "stuffing". "Why can't we just have the facts and the clues?" he demanded. "Not description of the clues but the real thing — bloodstained matches, bits of hair, real fingerprints all leading the reader to the solution. A dossier rather than a book, with reports, newspaper cuttings, photographs and so on."

The result, after a sceptical publisher had been pummelled into acquiescence by Wheatley, was *Murder off Miami* and wild success. At one stage Hutchinson had 40 girls in Watford dipping matches into red ink and struggling with Cellophane envelopes. (For those who remained baffled, there was a sealed solution at the back.) A quarter of a million copies were sold, three more titles were issued, with translations in eight languages. It did not appear in Germany, however, because a torn-up photograph of a nude lady invoked the wrath of Hitler's censors. "The morals of the book", they reported, "must be designated more than inferior, created for English living conditions, not German ones."

In 1945 Links, who had served in the RAF during the war, married Mary Lutyens, daughter of the architect, and a novelist, historian and biographer of Krishnamurti. It was a strikingly happy marriage. Their first honeymoon was on a troopship, and by way of compensation Links took Mary to Venice the following year. It was a revelation, and Venice became the lodestar of the second half of his life.

Curiously for a couple on their honeymoon, they chose to follow in the footsteps of John Ruskin and Effie on their own honeymoon some 100 years earlier. Out of this grew an astonishing intimacy with the Ruskins that resulted in four books still recognised as authoritative pictures of the world of Victorian high art: Mary's *Effie in Venice*, *Millais and the Ruskins*, *The Ruskins and the Grays*, and Joe's *The Ruskins in Normandy*, as well as his superb abridgement of *The Stones of Venice*. Links had discovered Effie's letters home, anguished and crossed and double-crossed, and had given them to the archivist at the Hudson's Bay Company, of which he was by then a director, who deciphered and sent them back to him at the rate of one a week. "It was like having a daughter living in Venice at the time."

By this stage the Linkses were going two or three times a year to Venice, always staying at the Danieli. "Why buy a house, when you can have 120 servants?" he asked. Research into Ruskin took up Mary's time, and Joe amused himself by writing *Venice for Pleasure* — "a guide to the pleasures of Venice without its pains". Few books of any genre have such charm, grace, wit, companionability — a true case of the style showing the man — and fewer guidebooks have ever been written with such mastery of their subject or understanding of how history creates the sense of place. Instantly acclaimed, it has never been out of print, and Links spent much of his last months preparing a sixth edition. In 1994 it was the first guidebook ever to be read on BBC Radio 4, with John Wells capturing all the debonair joy of the original.

Venice was also the locus of Links's most substantial work, the cataloguing of the works of Canaletto. This occupied the last 25 years of his life. Mary had given him a copy of W. G. Constable's great *catalogue raisonné*, in which was a photograph of a painting described as lost but which Links recognised as one hanging over his sister-in-law's fireplace. A correspondence with Constable ensued, during which Constable asked Links if he would take over the final preparation of a second edition of the catalogue, which he estimated would take six weeks.

It took six years, at the end of which Links was the acknowledged world authority on Canaletto. He was always too modest to accept the description, but his rigorously scholarly, sceptical work, his meticulousness in a notoriously confusing field, and a growing passion for the subject made an outstanding contribution not only to Canaletto studies but to the story of view painting (about which he wrote a pioneering book).

He also brought the true greatness of Canaletto to the appreciation of a wider public. Links was the moving spirit behind the great exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum in New York, for which he obtained scores of paintings never before seen in public, and he was closely involved with the exhibitions at the Queen's Gallery in 1981 and the Royal Academy in 1995. He produced an exemplary popular introduction to the painter for Phaidon, as well as an innovative study of Canaletto's commercial life, *Canaletto and his Patrons* (1977).

Work on Canaletto continued unabated right up to his death, with the final preparation of a supplement to the catalogue, and a book for the Soane Museum on its recently cleaned masterpiece (seen here). Meanwhile, the predicament of the real Venice was never far from his thoughts, and one of his most lasting contributions will be the many successful restorations undertaken by the Venice in Peril Fund with money he was instrumental in raising.

He is survived by Mary Links and her daughter. Of his two godsons, Sir Tim Sainsbury survives him but Jeffrey Bernard predeceased him last month.

DEIRDRE REDGRAVE

Deirdre Redgrave, author and agitator, died of pneumonia on September 29 aged 58. She was born on January 6, 1939.

DEIRDRE REDGRAVE was one of life's great characters. A striking beauty with luxuriant red hair, whose looks faded as life gradually became more difficult, she was born into an aristocratic Anglo-Irish family, the Hamilton-Hills. At the end of the 1950s she was one of the most sought-after debutantes of her time. In 1963 she married Corin Redgrave, son of the actor Michael Redgrave. During their 13-year marriage Deirdre was the toast of bohemian swinging London.

Later, as things got tougher, she never lost the ability to laugh at herself, raucously doing so as she chain-smoked and consumed copious quantities of red wine. She took on many jobs to make ends meet, from film and stage designer, to journalist, and from costume designer to author.

Nothing subsequently embarrassed her more than her supposedly tell-all biography *To Be a Redgrave* (1982), which she co-wrote in the aftermath of the break-up of her marriage — partly in revenge but mostly as a way of producing much-needed cash. Long after all such bitterness had departed, one friend delighted in playfully tormenting her by reading aloud to her the more fruity passages — and her toes would curl with mortification. But she would always manage to laugh and never lost her sense of the ironies of her life.

In her marriage she went along with the eccentric, extremist political views of her husband and of his sister, Vanessa — later looking back on such "demo" days as a mixture of fun and lunacy. She always insisted that the satirical character of Deirdre Spart — the partner of the student agitator Dave Spart — was based on her.

Five years ago breast cancer was diagnosed. In 1995 she published a moving book about her experience of cancer treatment entitled *Me and My Shadow*. She campaigned to keep the Royal Marsden Hospital open and even addressed a rally in Trafalgar Square.

When the cancer returned in 1996, she did not give up despite the prognosis. She was determined to fight on, not only for the sake of her family but also as an example to the many cancer patients she had befriended.

Deirdre Redgrave touched many lives and was never short of admirers, one being Jeffrey Bernard, who before his death last month would regularly refer to her in his column in *The Spectator* as "she who would drown in my eyes" — a reference to a phrase she had once used when they were having dinner together in Soho.

The support she received during her illness from both her ex-husband Corin and his family meant much to her and she would often recall her lunches with her former mother-in-law, Rachel Kempson, and the laughs that they had shared.

She is survived by her daughter and her son.

MICHAEL CUMMINGS

Michael Cummings, OBE, cartoonist, died on October 9 aged 78. He was born on June 1, 1919.

THE longest-serving contemporary cartoonist, Cummings drew for more than 40 years for the *Daily Express* and for 32 years for the *Sunday Express* — with his work latterly appearing in both *The Times Magazine* and the *Daily Mail*. Although never quite the equal of Vicky or David Low, he was a formidable draughtsman with a particular strength in likenesses.

Arthur Stuart Michael Cummings — always called Michael by his family and friends — was born in Leeds, the son of a journalist who went on to become the noted Liberal columnist on the *News Chronicle*, A. J. Cummings.

After going to The Hall preparatory school in Hampstead and then to Gresham's School, Holt, Cummings became a student at the Chelsea School of Art. While there, he contributed his first cartoon — an attack on Neville Chamberlain — to *Tribune*, a surprisingly left-wing publication for an artist whose work was later thought to be violently right-wing. But the explanation probably was that Chamberlain had always been one of his father's particular *bêtes noires* — and there were not very many anti-appeasement papers to choose from.

His art studies were interrupted by the outbreak of the Second World War, for the duration of which he served as an RAF draughtsman with the Air Ministry.

At the end of the war, Cummings returned to art school and became a regular contributor to *Tribune*. At the same time he took a teaching course at the Institute of Education, London University, so as to have an alternative fallback career to his chosen vocation as an artist.

He had just secured a teaching post at St Albans Grammar School for Girls when, through an introduction from his father, he was given an interview with Lord Beaverbrook. Another meeting followed, with the Editor of the *Daily Express*, Arthur Christiansen, who offered Cummings a trial engagement as a cartoonist.

He joined the *Daily Express* in 1949, his cartoons intended to fill the gap left by the retirement of Strube and to provide a contrast to the more domestic ones of the paper's other regular artist, Giles.

Initially, Cummings had some difficulty in finding sufficiently good ideas to satisfy Christiansen — at one stage being saved from the sack by Lord Beaverbrook. But from the beginning his cartoons had a boldness of line and made dramatic use of black and white. The other characteristic features and marks of his drawings were the explanatory labels which he attached to everyone and everything — together with the use of handwritten speech and thought-bubbles in the style of Gillray, Rowlandson and other 18th-century caricaturists (and later of *Private Eye*).

Until 1990 Cummings contributed cartoons to the *Daily Express* three days a week, and

from 1958 he also drew for the *Sunday Express*. During Malcolm Muggeridge's editorship of *Punch* in the mid-1950s, his cartoons were a regular feature of that magazine: and he became a frequent contributor to various French publications including *L'Aurore*, *Paris Match* and *Candide*.

A fondness for the character of General de Gaulle made him one of his most frequently caricatured leaders, appearing even into the 1980s when he was thinly disguised as Margaret Thatcher. It was in France, during 1953, that Cummings met his future wife, Anne-Marie. They were married three years later.

A controversial cartoonist, Cummings was often criticised for his attitude towards immigration. A particularly incendiary drawing was one in 1968 which showed Enoch Powell in the dock and Jeremy Thorpe, then the Liberal leader, pointing an accusing figure at him and saying: "Prisoner Powell. You stand convicted of the infamous crime of telling the truth!"

Cummings always defended his right to make strong statements through his drawings, believing that the cartoonist should not be afraid to approach the frontiers of bad taste in the interests of honesty.

He consistently attacked the Conservative Party, for which he voted, with at least as much vitriol as the parties that did not command his support. He once described himself as a rude little boy speaking out at the awkward moment. Cummings published two major collections of his cartoons: *These Uproarious Years* (1954) and *On the Point of My Pen* (1985).

A long-time member of the Garrick Club, Cummings was appointed OBE in 1983. He leaves his widow and a stepson.

MILESTONES

A. L. Rowse, CH, historian, died on October 3. He was born on December 4, 1903.

The first working-class boy ever elected to a fellowship of All Souls, A. L. Rowse could never be slow or insipid. He could, however, be ridiculous. Unfortunately, his intellectual curiosity had been snubbed in early life, and his reaction of scorn became a habit. His pride and bitter resentment of criticism — as well as a prolific output of work that is better forgotten — was to obscure the solid achievement of his fine books about Tudor and Elizabethan England. In 1973 he claimed to have identified the "Dark Lady" of Shakespeare's sonnets as Emilia Lanier. The scholarship and ingenuity were considerable, but the case was not generally accepted. However, in his last, as in his first writings, his understanding of Cornwall, his native county achieved a depth and vibrancy that best expressed his personality.

Obituary published on October 6.

Lady Brook, CBE, founder of the Brook Advisory Centres, died on October 3. She was born on October 12, 1907.

Helen Brook played a large role in the sexual revolution of the 1960s, and although she believed neither in free love nor in single-parent families, she was the first to offer contraceptive services to girls under the age of consent. She married at 18, but was soon divorced. She spent two years in Paris working as a painter before returning to London and marrying Robin Brook. She worked for the Family Planning Association from 1952, and was director of the Marie Stopes Memorial Clinic from 1961, where after the launch of the Pill in 1963 she began advising unmarried women. Breaking away in the following year, she opened the first Brook Advisory Centre, and in 1967 she began seeing underage girls without consulting their parents or GPs. Many people were scandalised, but she argued that ignorance does not ensure innocence.

Obituary published on October 7.

John Merricks, yachtsman, died in Punta Ala, Italy, on October 8. He was born on February 16, 1971.

John Merricks, who was killed at Punta Ala, at just 26, was one of the most talented racing yachtsmen of his generation. In his short life he had amassed a string of successes at the highest international level, winning a silver medal in the 470 class at the Olympic Games last year, and the Mumm 36 class in the Admiral's Cup this summer. He began sailing on Rutland Water, where the sailing club awarded him a 420 dinghy, in which he raced with Rob Wilson to victory in successive youth championships. He and Ian Walker were IYRU world champions in 1994 and European champions in 1995.

Obituary published on October 10.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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SLADE. Desperately seeking Elaine Slade... Please phone Bill's Mum on 01235 831409. I lost your number! Big Kiss - Billy the Kid.

SPLANE (or Iliadis), Nicholas born 27th May, 1949 at Queen Charlottes Hospital, son of Patricia Frances (Splane) Iliadis and Marcel Joseph Constantine Iliadis, or anyone knowing his whereabouts please contact Dr. Christopher Walker on 01276 21637.

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

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THE SUNDAY TIMES

LEGAL NOTICES

No. 004797 of 1997
IN THE HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE
CHANCERY DIVISION
COMPANIES COURT
IN THE MATTER OF SECOND LONDON AMERICAN TRUST PLC
- and -
IN THE MATTER OF THE COMPANIES ACT 1985
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that a Petition was on 26 September 1997 presented to Her Majesty's High Court of Justice for the confirmation of the cancellation of the share premium account of the above-named Company amounting to £44,401,272 by (inter alia) returning capital which is in excess of the wants of the Company.
AND NOTICE IS FURTHER GIVEN that the said Petition is directed to be heard before the Companies Court Registrar at the Royal Courts of Justice, Strand, London WC2A 2LL on Wednesday the 22nd day of October 1997.
ANY Creditor or Shareholder of the said Company desiring to oppose the making of an Order for the confirmation of the said cancellation of share premium account should appear at the time of hearing in person or by Counsel for that purpose.
A copy of the said Petition will be furnished to any such person requiring the same by the undermentioned Solicitors on payment of the regulated charge for the same.
DATED the 9th day of October 1997.
LINKLATERS & PAINES (DTL)
One Silk Street
London EC2Y 8HQ
Solicitors
for the above-named Company.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

TRUSTEE ACTS

NOTICE is hereby given pursuant to s27 of the TRUSTEE Act, 1925 that any person having a CLAIM against or an INTEREST in the ESTATE of any of the deceased person's whose names, addresses and descriptions are set out below is hereby required to send particulars in writing of his claim or interest to the person or persons mentioned in relation to the deceased person concerned before the date specified after which date the estate of the deceased will be distributed by the personal representatives among the persons entitled thereto having regard only to the claims and interests of which they have had notice.

ORVIS, IVY GLADYS, 21 Cliffview Road, Hithe/Saldn, Lewisham SE13 died 12th February 1997, particulars to Piper Smith & Basham Solicitors, 31 Warwick Square, London SW1V 2AF before 18th December 1997.

HOPKINS, DAVID JOHN of 102 St Peters Road, Reading, Berks died on 17th September 1997, particulars to Sarjeant & Sheppard Solicitors of 150 Prior Street, Reading RG1 1HB before 19th December 1997.

PUBLIC NOTICES

THE ROYAL ASSOCIATION IN AID OF DEAF PEOPLE
Notice to Subscribers
Notice is hereby given that the 156th Annual General Meeting of the Association will be held in the Conference Suite at Binder Hamlyn, 20 Old Bailey, London EC4 on Wednesday 12 November 1997 at 5pm.
Subscribers wishing to attend will receive the necessary papers seven days before the meeting upon written application to: The General Secretary, RAD, 27 Old Oak Road, London W3 7HN.

LEGAL, PUBLIC, COMPANY & PARLIAMENTARY NOTICES
TO PLACE NOTICES FOR THIS SECTION PLEASE TELEPHONE
0171 680 6878
FAX: 0171 481 9313
Notices are subject to confirmation and should be received by 2.30pm two days prior to insertion.

Shares end on day's highs

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
506	407	Allied Domecq	498½	+ 6	5.5	14.9
676	336	Bulmer (HP)	459½	+ 9½	3.9	12.8
76½	40	Burn Stewart	46½	+ 1½	9.5	..
1040	865	Glenmorangie 3	962½	+ 12½	1.7	23.8
631	425½	Grand Met	583	+ 9½	3.2	18.7
627	424	Guinness†	577	+ 1½	3.4	19.9
390	284	Highland Dist	284	..	3.7	13.3
336	213	Matthew Clark	250	- 3	1.0	7.7
189½	57½	Morrison W	58	..	6.6	14.6
2003½	1462½	SA Brewers	1828½	- 3½	2.1	..

BANKS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1531½	918½	ABN AMRO	1240½	- 50	2.7	17.2
984½	710	Abbey Ntl	954½	+ 34	3.6	15.6
725	532½	Alliance & Leicst	720½	+ 14	3.8	16.9
563	398½	Allied Irish	541½	+ 4	3.4	15.4
518½	363½	Am New Z	490½	- 16½	3.8	..
4931½	2815	Bank America	4750	- 65½	..	..
548½	391½	Bank Scotland	525½	+ 9	2.1	14.5
1330	978½	Barclays	1625	- 2½	2.6	15.4
814½	517	BK of Ireland	799½	+ 10	2.5	17.6
8828½	6206½	Chase	8500½	+ 78½	..	..
1759½	1259½	Commerzbk	1709½	- 6½	2.8	..
663½	559½	Dai Ichi Kan Y	607	+ 6½	0.7	..
4599½	2709½	Deutsche Bk	4331½	- 68½	1.5	..
1300	750½	Dresdner Bank	1265½	+ 6½	2.9	..
947½	564½	Fuji Bank Y	659	+ 8½	0.7	..
2389½	1372½	HSBC	2054	- 1	2.8	16.6
2258½	1241	HSBC Hd	1954½	- 4	2.9	15.8
783	696½	Halifax	742	+ 14½	2.5	25.0
637½	483½	Irish Perm	620	..	2.5	17.1
885½	424	Lloyds TSB†	791	- 8½	2.5	23.0
1055	869½	Ntl West Bk	934	- 8½	3.1	14.9
1017½	663½	Nat West	952½	..	3.0	14.7
504	450	Northern Rock	498	+ 15½	2.3	19.7
722½	508	Rbl Bk Scot	674½	- 3½	3.6	14.5
1037½	681	Shmd Charit	824	+ 17	2.3	14.6
2164½	1369½	Wells Fargo	2164½	..	..	..
3037½	2035½	Westpac	3009½	- 24	3.8	..
373½	264	Woolwich†	317½	- 3½	3.1	18.8

BREWERIES, PUBS & REST

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
878½	717½	Bass	836	+ 3½	3.8	15.7
68½	43	Bn Ic Inv Bst	51½	..	4.4	10.9
205	142½	Burtonwd Sw	149	..	5.0	13.3
152½	121½	City Centre Rest	141	..	2.2	21.9
747½	575½	Compass Gp	683	- 5	1.6	25.7
305	250	Elizabeth P A	273½	- 1½	2.5	15.1
258½	227	Enterprise Inns	248½	+ 1½	3.9	17.6
485	412	Fuller Sm	437½	..	2.9	15.2
536	366½	Greenall's Gp	382½	- 7	5.2	9.5
770	642	Grnne King	685	- 1	3.0	14.7
237½	152½	Grosvnrs Inns	205	- 1	4.0	21.0
293½	219½	Groups Chd Ctn	283½	- 5	1.4	..
292½	255½	Hardy Hanson	258	..	5.2	11.5
2850	2575	Hdgsn J	2625	..	2.9	14.6
78	63	Int Restaurnt	63	..	4.2	10.1
357	320	Marstons†	320	..	2.7	14.0
315½	252	Median Thtrs	291½	..	3.0	9.8
615	502½	Morland	509	..	3.2	13.1
256½	210	Old Eng Pub	236½	..	1.0	31.7
42½	18½	Pacemaker	26½	..	..	..
820½	537	PizzaExpress	820	- 9	0.5	..
437½	332½	Ramsdens (H)	357½	..	1.7	31.7
378½	342½	Regent Inns	359½	- 1	1.4	..
130	102½	SFI	105	- 3½	0.8	22.4
783½	627	Scot & Newc	700½	..	1.8	15.0
705	244	Vaux Group	258½	- 11	5.2	11.5
1527½	1105	Wetherspoon JH	1527½	+ 10	0.6	..
263	235½	Whitbread	257½	- 1½	3.8	14.5
706½	513	Yorkshire Gp D	528	..	4.2	15.1
377	279½	Yates Bros	371	..	1.0	29.7
702½	615	Young S	680	..	2.8	26.7

BUILDING & CONSTRUCT

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
32½	15½	AB Inds	32½	- 2½	..	..
528	178	Aggreko	292	..	3.3	..
362½	267½	Ahern	362½	..	2.6	21.7
166½	90½	Ashtd	149	..	3.6	..
512	347½	Ashtyd	548½	+ 3½	2.8	16.6
660	245	Ashtrwn, Sykes	663½	+ 2½	2.2	16.2
33½	22½	Ashtwd	33	+ 3	1.4	23.3
48½	29½	Avonskirt	41½	..	4.5	8.6
39½	24½	Bardt	30½	- ½	4.5	26.8
604	49½	Barcom	56½	..	2.1	13.7
259½	236	Barratt Devel	251½	+ ½	2.1	13.7
210	164½	Beazer	195½	+ 1	4.2	12.5
291½	259½	Bellway	291	+ ½	2.7	17.4
22½	16½	Bellwnch	19½	..	..	8.0
72	30	Bett Bailey	49	..	4.1	6.9
166½	106	Bickby Gp	158½	+ 1½	1.6	15.8
172	140	Bird Bros	144	..	5.0	4.9
385	238	Bost (Henry)	381	..	2.6	15.3
127½	57½	Brandon Hirst	127½	..	2.8	17.0
37½	27½	Britannia Gnrl	32½	..	3.7	6.4
72½	42½	Br Bldg & Eng	72½	..	..	..
159	129½	Bryant	132½	+ 1½	4.8	14.2
125½	99½	CALA	107½	..	4.4	8.6
6½	2½	Campbell & Arm	5½	..	..	..
86½	53½	Clarke T	86½	..	7.6	10.2
46	46	Costain#	46	..	..	..
105	71	Countryside	91	..	3.4	14.1
108½	90½	Cust Nicholson	100½	..	3.9	12.4
102½	67½	Davis(J)	93½	..	5.6	9.3
177½	147½	Ext Group	164	..	3.4	19.4
24	19½	Galliford	21	..	..	6.4
1025	857½	Gleeson (MJ)	1012½	+ 47½	2.0	18.3
320	260	Hawtrns Euro	260	..	2.2	16.7
184½	123	Hewdon-Stuart	177	- ½	2.4	23.7
21½	16½	Howard Hldgs	18½	..	..	5.6
316	130½	Jarvis	307½	..	1.9	23.2
227½	122½	Kellett	203½	..	2.6	16.2
250½	189½	Kier	221½	..	2.7	..
350½	278	Laing (J)	318	..	3.3	31.8
133½	110½	Laing 6.4% Cu Pf	122½	..	6.5	..
14½	9	Lovell (RJ)	11½	..	..	..
210½	162½	Lowndes (J)	188½	..	4.3	..
187½	112½	McAlpine (A)	141½	..	6.3	19.7
156½	99½	McCarthy & S	133½	..	2.3	15.9
75	53½	Mckenney	65	..	..	..
252½	157½	Morgan Sndall	165½	- 1	3.4	11.3
237½	234½	Morrison Const	239½	..	1.9	20.9
144	102	Nicholson (J)	105½	..	4.2	10.2
266	208	Persimmon	234	..	5.2	11.8
102½	82	Pitbnhnnt	90	..	5.4	20.3
125	100	Pochin	125	- 2½	2.5	..
144½	97½	Pressing	113	+ 2	4.4	18.6
179½	145½	Redrow	169	..	2.7	14.8
347	265	Shndl Hldgs	342	..	2.6	29.6
362½	250	Spandex	250	- 7½	7.2	14.0
103	76	Swan Hill	83½	- ½	3.7	..
153½	115	Try Homes	146½	..	6.1	31.8
215	155	Taylor Woodrow	195	- ½	2.4	15.0
767½	512½	Tomkns Dbrgnt	622½	..	4.7	15.5
27½	13½	Tr Grnsq	27½	- ½	..	10.8
86	68	Westpkr	70	- 1	0.5	..
152½	112	Wimpey	131	..	4.5	18.4
74½	36½	Ward Hldgs	51½	..	..	..
271	224	Westbury	262½	..	3.2	15.2
12½	7½	Westpts	11½	- ½	1.7	10.8
19½	14½	Wilson (Con)	16½	- 1	3.7	17.0
152½	47½	Wilson Bowden	142½	- 1	2.6	14.4
155	119½	Wimpey (G)	123	+ ½	5.4	13.7

BUILDING MATERIALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
65	33	Ennstone Products	37½	+ ½	4.7	23.5
563	362	BPB	550½	..	3.7	15.5
127½	91½	Bpmpney Gp	97	..	4.0	24.6
64	37½	Brdgs Hldgs	61	..	..	..
452	351	Blue Circle	387½	- ½	4.1	16.2
1147	787½	Brmgm Midl	1015	..	6.4	11.0
54½	41½	Br Dredging	47½	..	5.4	11.8
232½	132½	BPM	215½	..	1.4	17.7
83½	62	Cambridge Wtr	67½	..	4.7	11.1
152½	102	Caradon	151½	..	5.0	11.8
198	144	Carclo Engrg	198	+ 2½	6.0	9.7
64½	49½	Carpets Int	57½	..	6.3	6.7
151½	120½	Cattles	147½	..	4.2	12.3
47½	37½	Chrstnsn Hldgs	47½	..	2.1	27.0
37½	27½	Clayton W	37½	..	3.3	31.8
72½	53½	Cookson	72½	..	2.2	20.0
108½	78½	Crest Nicholson	108½	..	1.8	26.2
72	57	Crh	71½	..	1.7	31.1
127½	97½	Delta	127½	..	3.1	18.1
77½	57½	Ennstone	77½	..	1.3	19.4
144½	107½	Etbnkstone	142	..	4.6	20.3
171½	111½	Evered	171½	..	2.7	11.0
109½	79½	Fairview Hmes	109½	..	1.1	16.6
47½	34½	Forbo-Nmrh	47½	..	3.0	20.4
47½	37½	Galliford	47½	..	3.3	31.8
13½	7½	Gibbs (A)	13½	..	..	..
115½	90½	Glynwed	115½	..	4.3	13.3
127½	97½	Grbnn Hldgs	127½	..	2.7	17.4
127½	97½	Hanson	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Heywood Wms	127½	..	7.0	15.1
127½	97½	Hillsdown	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Hoskins	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Ibstock	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Jeld-Wen	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Jnsn Cntrls	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Kingfisher	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Lafarge	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Lawrence (W)	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Lilleshall	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Marley	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Marshalls	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Marston	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Meggitt	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Minorco	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Mk Electrical	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Newarthill	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Norcros	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Pilkington	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Pochin	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Redland	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Rmc Group	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Sanderson	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Sgb	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Smith (DS)	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Tarmac	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Tilbury	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Travis Perkins	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Wedgwood	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Wilkinson	127½	..	3.1	15.5
127½	97½	Wolseley	127½	..	3.1	15.5

CHEMICALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

DISTRIBUTORS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

DIVERSIFIED INDUSTRIALS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
452½	327½	Aggreko	415	..	1.6	21.3
328	232	Acrod Hldgs†	268	..	2.3	12.5
917	703	Broken Hill	717½	- 2½	3.2	17.2
289	180½	BTR†	241½	+ ½	4.6	84
601½	461	BOC	551	+ 9	5.9	11.8
609	499½	Bunzlnr Inv	547	..	5.7	8.9
266	182	Cookson	246	+ 2½	4.5	15.2
229½	197½	Cossll	222½	..	5.8	9.6
400½	253½	DCC	393½	+ 1	2.2	14.7
317½	253½	Gallaher†	291	+ 1	3.2	9.2
140½	101½	Hanson Crdtl	130½	+ 1½	8.7	14.2
667½	422½	Hutch Whmp	557½	+ 2	2.1	33.3
478½	361	Imperial Tob	371	+ 1	6.7	7.4
522½	331	Jardine Math	481½	+ 5	1.2	18.4
158½	104	Lambie	115½	+ 1½	5.2	11.8
175½	141½	McLeod Russel	164½	..	5.2	13.1
458½	388½	Powell Duffryn	448½	..	7.0	12.7
197½	153½	Smiths	181½	+ ½	7.0	14.1
604½	449½	Swire Pacific	456½	+ 1½	2.7	31.1
397½	313	TT Group†	370	- 2	2.7	15.1
351	252½	Tomkins	308½	+ 2½	3.6	15.5
210	165	Unidare	202½	+ 2½	2.6	18.5
498	359½	Wardle Storeys	370	..	3.0	16.1
387½	289½	Wassall†	340½	- 1	2.5	15.2
166½	122½	Wilkinson†	125½	..	5.0	18.2

ELECTRICITY

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
410	184½	Br Energy	401½	+ 1½	4.3	78.1
655	463½	Energy Group	647½	- 4	11.8	8.0
797½	162	Midland Grid	796½	+ 5	4.7	12.2
560½	460½	Midland Pwr	539½	+ 3	5.8	10.4
488	352½	Nthn Ireland	483½	..	5.4	22.0
797½	565½	Powergen	742	..	4.2	12.0
478½	319½	Hydro-Elect	457½	+ 1	4.8	10.9
492	371½	Scottish Power	477	+ 2½	4.8	12.5
482½	373½	Southern Elec	475½	- 1	5.7	13.0

ENGINEERING

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
492½	379½	Acal	390½	..	3.1	13.0
240½	144½	Acorn	144½	- 2½	..	..
5.22½	365	Aimtrust	520	..	06	39.1
48½	30½	Allied	36	..	4.2	9.4
184½	118	Alstec	127	..	7.8	14.9
626	505	Alstom#	556	..	0.3	..
293½	139½	BICC	170	+ ½	9.4	15.4
173	87	Beales Hunter	87½	..	15.3	..
78	32	Bebcons	45½	..	0.5	21.5
382½	285	Black	246	..	7.1	7.2
457½	297½	Brammer†	425	+ ½	3.1	17.0
147	9	Bulgin A	13	..	7.4	15.5
157½	127½	CML Micro	154½	..	4.9	19.9
39½	22½	Channel Hldgs	35	..	5.3	9.5
43½	27½	Chloride	35	- ½	5.3	9.5
920	537½	Crouchley	722½	..	2.2	20.0
398½	257½	Delta†	330½	+ 2	5.7	12.2
367	265	Dowmac	322½	..	4.4	14.1
95½	62½	Dowding Mitchl	75	..	5.3	12.7
306	220	Dtack	300	..	0.7	31.8
5525	3316½	Electrolux 'B'	5481½	- 16½	1.9	26.9
77½	19½	Emess	20	..	2.5	13.4
3100	1711½	Electrolux 'B'	3016½	- 9½	0.7	..
78½	27½	Eurocopy	31½	- ½	10.7	4.8
541	305	Eurotherm	409½	+ 6	2.8	16.4
646½	483	Fairey Group	645½	+ 2	1.7	19.4
495	291½	Fibronic Const	490½	- ½	0.3	75.3
32	19½	Forward Tech	20	..	7.8	..
414	327½	GBE	397½	+ 5	4.1	21.7
210	126½	Gooding	208	..	2.3	17.4
148½	57½	Ind Control†	61	..	4.1	..
26	12	Inbtell	13	- 1	8.7	48.3
115	93½	Kode	96½	..	3.2	8.7
63½	37½	LPA Ind	61	..	4.2	17.3
308	202½	Morhouse-Sar	215	..	3.8	10.7
30½	11	Microvitec	17	+ ½	6.4	..
425	425	Mtbl	425	..	..	..
242	145	Network Tech	161½	+ ½	0.8	..
458	302	Oxford Ind	424	+ 2½	2.2	13.7
237½	41½	Pace Micro	63½	..	6.5	10.9
98	29½	Peck	42	..	8.0	13.0
5496½	2328½	Phillips Lmp nv	5184½	- 53½	..	10
185½	142½	Pleasnct	152½	..	6.3	9.1
239½	33½	Plessey	39½	- 1½	4.7	3.8
266	208½	Pressac	256½	- 1	2.8	20.4
48	31	Prestnch	35½	..	5.6	..
512½	276	Psion	454	- ½	0.6	37.5
301½	215	Racal Elect	228½	- 2½	3.3	27.5
135½	99½	Radamec	108½	..	3.6	16.4
380	258	Renishaw	366½	..	1.0	..
7½	1½	Rodame	2	..	..	..
221½	149½	Rotherg	219½	..	3.9	13.6
233½	169½	SDI Bsc Sys	197½	+ 6	1.4	25.8
411½	305	Senamond	311	..	5.2	17.2
83½	52½	Sibemrnds	60½	- 1	2.9	16.1
5399½	3671½	TDK	5653½	- 62½	0.5	..
108	66½	TGI	72	..	6.0	7.7
135½	91	TLG	102	..	5.0	12.5
34½	7	Tadpole Tech	7½	..	..	..
47½	43½	Telemetrix	47½	- ½	2.3	34.8
207½	175	Tehdec	202½	..	..	..
159	125½	Thorpe (F)	151½	+ 2	9.3	18
72½	27½	Vctl Systems	34½	+ 2	2.1	..
287	70	Tuscltd	195	..	6.5	6.9
74½	36½	Vesty	71	- ½	0.2	91
136½	83½	Vitrol	112½	..	6.3	31
87½	56½	Avgtn Technology	78	+ ½	..	..
532	403	Vaico	530	..	6.0	15.5
151½	101½	Wavetucker#	107½	..	..	..

ELECTRONIC & ELECTL

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

INSURANCE

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

HEALTHCARE

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
2175	1100	Amersham	2170	+ 12½	1.3	32.7
148	116½	Assoc Hosp	134	- 1	3.5	16.6
627½	472½	Bespak	612½	+ 2½	2.5	20.8
1432½	447½	Biocompos Ind	515	+ 22½	..	..
140	95½	Cam First	101	..	5.0	..
130½	96	Cam Uh	129	+ ½	10	17.4
114½	88½	Celsis	99	+ 1	..	..
415	155½	Community Hl	403½	- ½	3.6	..
31	24½	CrossCare†	26½	..	4.5	12.8
28½	5½	Environed	5	..	..	..
167½	108½	Ferrans Group	120	..	3.1	11.8
215	129	Huntigh Tec	145	+ 3	2.6	18.3
390	167½	Innovative Tech	182½	+ 12½	..	..
96	60	Inspecsar Gp	72	..	6.2	11.4
426½	330	Isotron	415	..	1.9	..
182	155	Low Intl	168½	- ½	2.1	23.1
165½	122½	Nestor NMH	156	..	2.8	30.6
30	3½	Premier Health	5½	..	..	..
319½	234½	Schott†	296½	..	3.4	18.6
500½	362½	Seton Health	451½	..	2.4	16.4
919	123	Shield Diag	732½	- 25	..	..
197½	162½	Smith & Nephew	188½	..	3.0	17.7
3½	2½	Tanaros	2½	..	4.1	10.4
289½	243½	UniChem†	281½	..	4.0	21.7
310	226½	West Hthcare	305½	..	2.7	18.0

HOUSEHOLD GOODS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
282½	167½	Ampdrug	185½	- 1	4.3	10.5
250	170	Albert	212½	- 1	5.5	14.1
32½	22½	Ipmgp	33½	..	3.6	20.4
182½	102½	BLP Group	165	..	4.5	6.2
78½	43½	Boston Blinds	45½	..	4.1	29.3
105	57½	Black Arrow	98	- ½	5.8	8.9
387½	324½	Bss (Penrith)	358½	..	2.2	18.2
204½	169½	Cornwell Prfs Spt	178½	+ 3	2.1	15.0
42½	27½	Crayfishin	35	..	..	..
130½	45	Dalhwm	129½	- ½	5.8	..
290½	142	Dawes Group	165	+ ½	3.1	12.7
145½	12½	Eclipse Bands	137	..	3.1	12.4
35	26	Elliott	34½	+ ½	4.3	6.5
335	140	Gardner†	309	- 6	2.3	10.5
329	250	HRP Intl	250	..	2.1	12.0
24	20½	Jordan (T)	52	..	1.3	..
193½	103½	Kenwood App	119	..	3.4	17.4
12	7½	Lombard†	11½	..	1.1	23.1
117½	114½	Midhmr	110½	..	5.3	13.3
187½	169½	Mayborn†	177½	- 1	5.9	12
972	555	Osborne & Little	642½	+ 2½	3.9	13.2
533	435	Paterson Zoch	442½	- 1	5.3	11.0
443	317	Paterson Zoch A	377½	- 1	6.2	9.3
168	108	Pilkn's	159½	- 1	3.1	12.1
366	195	Pilkn's A Vtg	335	..	3.7	13.1
1747	696	Reckitt Colm	997½	- 7	3.7	17.9
459½	335	Relyon	455	..	3.1	17.9
237½	205½	Royal Doulton	217½	+ 2½	2.1	27.0
372½	297½	Sherwoodt	315	..	4.1	13.6
20½	15½	Smiddard	18½	- ½	5.0	20.4
238	255	Steven	255½	- 1	2.8	13.4
142½	108½	Stakwelldt	142½	- ½	3.5	12.9
217½	158	Tomkins	159	..	3.6	9.3
102½	79	Vitpina	81	..	3.8	10.7
87	40	Walker Greenbk	57½	- ½	5.2	11.1
87	74½	Richard Jnkns	80	..	4.9	21.1
215	239	Wood (Arthur)	235	..	3.7	16.1

INSURANCE

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
3037½	2285½	Am Sun	3025	+ 3½	2.6	..
230	96	Angerstein	111	..	11.7	..
89½	61	Prudntsl	81½	..	9.8	12.0
1010	719	Britannic	990	..	4.2	14.1
130	112	CUK Insce	123	- ½	1.1	9.6
824	630½	Eagle Star†	806½	+ 3	4.6	12.5
1000	775	Eqtbl Life	1000	..	3.6	12.3
52	30½	Windsor	47	..	..	6.8

INVESTMENT TRUSTS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]	[illegible]

FOOD MANUFACTURERS

1997 High	Low	Company	Price (p)	+/-	Yld %	P/E
1322	897	Bibby	1312½	+ 6	1.2	25.1
227½	108½	Cst Hundred	130½	..	4.5	3.2
562	708½	Dwnlms Intl	956½	+ 22	2.2	23.3
737½	525	Spkmn-Sarcoll	725	+ 6	2.4	19.0
303½	220½	Charlesy Intl	280½	- 1	4.8	12.8
698½	450	TT	676	+ 3½	2.6	21.5
120½	101½	Dunsley (E)	109½	..	7.0	10.3
120½	92½	Trans-Tec	110	..	2.8	14.9
225½	144½	Hughes Lloyd	225	+ 1½	3.9	17.0

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RUMBA 30

Bourguignon's Gallic flair for Club Med

BUSINESS

WEEKEND MONEY
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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

SATURDAY OCTOBER 11 1997

1F RK

Skanska launches rescue bid for Costain

Costain: will stand down

By George Sivell

SKANSKA has launched an 11th-hour rescue for Costain, the troubled UK building and construction group whose shares have been suspended for almost a year.

A financial reconstruction outlined yesterday allows Skanska, the Scandinavian engineering and construction group, to take a stake of 7.6 per cent, which could be increased to 40 per cent, triggering a full bid, under a complex option arrangement.

Costain, whose shares were suspended at 45p, is to raise around £47.5 million in an open offer of one new share for each 1.59 shares held at 40p. It will be backed by the three biggest shareholders who at present control three quarters of the company. They are Intria of Malaysia, Kharafi of Kuwait and Raymond of Saudi Arabia holding 37.2 per cent, 19.7 per cent and 7.6 per cent respectively if the offer takes effect. Other shareholders, including banks, will hold 27.9 per cent.

Skanska and Costain have been working together on the Bridgend Parc Prison, a large private finance initiative scheme.

Skanska is to underwrite part of the offer and is expected to emerge with a 7.6 per cent stake. Costain's long-suffering banks are underwriting the rest of the offer and will in the process convert £19 million of debt into shares. The Scandinavians have also been granted options over Costain shares held by the big three shareholders which, if exercised in full, would give it 40 per cent of the group, triggering a requirement for a full bid.

Shareholders will be asked to approve the deal at a special meeting on November 3, and the shares are expected to be relisted by Friday November 7, one year after their suspension.

Peter Costain, the last remaining link with the founding Costain family, will step down as non-executive deputy chairman.

The financial reconstruction will leave Costain with shareholders' funds of £26 million and net cash of £58.6 million. In return for its financial support Skanska will have the right to bid jointly with Costain for any building and civil engineering projects worth £20 million or more for which Costain might bid.

Costain also took the opportunity to publish full-year results for 1996 and half-year results for 1997. They have been marred by problems over the disposal of the US Coal subsidiary and the reduction in purchase price from £21 million to £14 million.

Before the effects of the open offer are taken into account Costain ended its latest half year of trading with £21.4 million of liabilities. In the year to end December 1996 the company suffered a pre-tax loss of £62.3 million, against £142.6 million for 1995. Sales in 1996 fell to £744.5 million from £824 million in 1995. No dividends have been paid. For the six months to June 30 1997 Costain suffered loss before interest and tax of £3.7 million (£13 million) on sales down from £357 million to £317 million.

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William Hill sale the end of Brent Walker

By Dominic Walsh

BRENT WALKER, the debt-laden leisure group, has asked to be delisted from the Stock Exchange after confirmation yesterday that William Hill, bookmaker, its last major asset, is to be sold to Nomura International for £700 million.

The proceeds of the sale, plus a further £49 million of surplus cash in the William Hill business, will be used to pay off a chunk of the group's £1.3 billion-plus debt mountain, but the shortfall means ordinary shareholders will receive nothing. When the deal is completed next month, Brent Walker, whose shares peaked at 465p in 1987, will be wound up, probably through liquidation.

Yesterday's deal effectively closes the book on a company that became one of the stock market's darlings in the 1980s. George Walker, a former East End boxer, borrowed heavily to create a glamorous empire ranging from luxury hotels and casinos to pubs, golf courses and marinas, but came badly unstuck during the recession.

He was ousted in 1991, although three years later he was acquitted after a multi-million-pound fraud trial.

Nomura, as with its recent £1.2 billion purchase of Inntrepreneur and Spring Inns, is acquiring William Hill through a specially-created vehicle, the Grand Bookmaking Company.

Guy Hands, head of principle finance at Nomura International, will sit on the GBC board and is expected to securitise the business's cashflow.

There had been suggestions that Mr Hands was planning to sack the William Hill management, after it declared its support for a rival bid from CVC Capital partners. However, a spokesman for Nomura said last night that discussions with John Brown, managing director, and his team had been "very positive".

William Hill is the UK's second largest chain of bookies after Ladbrokes, with 1,531 shops and 9,000 employees. It made a profit last year of £50.3 million from turnover of £1.65 billion.

Commentary, page 29

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5227.3	(+9.5)
Yield	3.12%	
FTSE All share	2455.93	(+4.44)
Nikkei	Closed	
New York:		
Dow Jones	8042.51	(-18.91)*
S&P Composite	967.94	(-2.68)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5¼%*	(5¼%)
Long Bond	99[illegible]*	(100[illegible])
Yield	6.42%*	(6.36%)

LONDON MONEY

3-mth Interbank	7¼%	(7[illegible]%)
Liffe long gilt future (Dec)	118⅞	(118[illegible])

STERLING

New York:		
$	1.6210*	(1.6243)
London:		
$	1.6210	(1.6271)
DM	2.8365	(2.8293)
FFr	9.5315	(9.5068)
SFr	2.3611	(2.3552)
Yen	194.58	(197.07)
£ Index	100.1	(100.2)

DOLLAR

London:		
DM	1.7515*	(1.7433)
FFr	5.8810*	(5.8580)
SFr	1.4575*	(1.4563)
Yen	120.00*	(121.25)
$ Index	104.5	(104.5)

Tokyo close Yen Closed

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Dec)	$20.70	($20.80)

GOLD

London close	$329.15	($330.60)

* denotes midday trading price

Gencor in merger to create gold colossus

By Alasdair Murray

GENCOR, the South African mining company, is to merge its gold interests with Gold Fields of South Africa to create the world's largest gold company.

The deal, which combines three of the richest goldfields in the world, is likely to spark another round of consolidation in the gold mining industry. Gold mining companies have come under immense pressure in the past year after the collapse of international gold prices, which have touched 12-year lows in recent months.

Gencor said yesterday that the deal would establish the first major group to own 100 per cent of its mining assets in South Africa, making the company a more attractive proposition for investors. Brian Gilbertson, chairman, said: "The deal brings together some of the finest gold mines in the world. We will be able to drive down costs substantially and have the financial muscle to step up exploration around the world."

Analysts said yesterday that the merger would be a blow to rival mining groups, including Anglo American, which will hold a small stake in the new venture via its shareholding in GFSA and JCI.

Anglo has been slowly building up its position in GFSA for a number of years but has been prevented from launching a takeover bid by the complex shareholding structure, including the Asteroid subsidiary specifically established by the Rupert family to prevent a hostile takeover.

But Johan Rupert, who holds investments in companies such as Richemont and Vendôme, is believed to have given the deal his blessing as it would rationalise the family's stakes in GFSA and Gencor.

JCI, which has been pressing for a separate merger with Lonrho, had also expressed an interest in merging some of its minefields with Gencor and owns a small stake in a subsidiary of GSFA.

Analysts warned that Mzi Khumalo, JCI's chief executive, could find himself further marginalised if Cyril Ramaphosa, the rival black empowerment businessman, takes a 10 per cent stake in GoldCo through New African Investments, his investment vehicle.

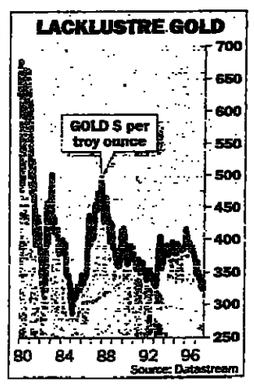
"Gilbertson will be a star in Africa having sealed his second deal in a year, while Ramaphosa's stock will also rise if he secures a stake," said one analyst.

It is also possible that GFSA could re-enter the battle for JCI's Tavistock coal mine, which is currently under offer to Lonrho for £225 million.

GoldCo will be based around three mining sites in Driefontein, Kloof and the southern Orange Free State. Other non-core assets are likely to be sold off over the next two years. The two companies will be making offers to minority shareholders in the separate goldfields in the coming months.

Current annual production will total four million ounces with resources estimated to be 120 million ounces.

Under the terms of the deal, Gencor will purchase Asteroid and take an indirect stake in GSFA, in return for selling its stake in the merged company, GoldCo, to GSFA.



Tempus, page 31

ANDRÉ CAMARA

Wheel power: Richard Farrant becomes chief operating officer of NewRo next week

Top posts at NewRo filled by old hands

By Marianne Curphey

HOWARD DAVIES, executive chairman of the new financial services watchdog, has named the team that will implement a wide-ranging shake-up of City regulation.

Richard Farrant, head of the Securities and Futures Authority; Michael Foot, superviser at the Bank of England; and Philip Thorpe, chief executive of Imro, have been appointed managing directors at NewRo, the body that will succeed the Securities and Investments Board.

The Government has drawn heavily from the old financial regulatory bodies criticised by Labour in opposition. The Treasury says it seeks to ensure continuity.

Mr Farrant, 53, is to start as chief operating officer at the end of next week. He will chair the management committee and be responsible for operations. Mr Foot, 50, will be in charge of the supervision of banks, building societies, securities firms, insurance companies and financial markets. Mr Thorpe, 43, will become head of authorisation, enforcement and consumer relations.

The new regulator will be formally launched in London on October 28. It will replace the nine current regulatory bodies, have a staff of 2,100, and will supervise banks, investment firms, stockbrokers, advisers, building societies and insurance companies.

Commentary, page 29
City Diary, page 30

MCI expected to open talks with WorldCom

From Oliver August in New York

MCI is expected to open formal talks with WorldCom after asking its investment bankers to seek more information on WorldCom's $30 billion takeover offer that is threatening MCI's $24 billion merger with BT.

The full MCI board met yesterday to hear presentations from Lazard Frères and Lehman Brothers, their advisers. Sir Peter Bonfield, the BT chief executive, was excluded because of the conflict of interest over whether to recommend BT's offer or WorldCom's offer.

Lazard and Lehman will work together during the negotiations. BT is expected to announce shortly whether it will participate in the negotiations. The MCI board is believed to have decided not to give any formal recommendation to shareholders on which bid to accept.

DTI takes a look at troubled Azlan

By Paul Durman

THE Department of Trade and Industry is taking an interest in Azlan, a computer network equipment company that yesterday revealed a catalogue of accounting blunders, a lack of financial controls, and suspected acts of concealment and impropriety by senior employees.

Azlan's failure to deal properly with mounting trade debts and stocks wiped out the £15.1 million profit it thought it had made, pushing it to a £14.1 million loss. Barrie Morgans, who has stepped in as chairman and chief executive, said that Azlan would not have survived but for the support of its bankers.

Mr Morgans said Azlan had had contacts with DTI officials, but he did not know whether the department was planning a full investigation.

An investigation by KPMG, the company's auditor, concluded that Azlan had suffered "a serious failure of management and internal financial control". It identified "certain areas of wrong-doing ... including serious neglect on the part of individuals and, possibly, acts of concealment and improper behaviour". In some cases, what controls existed were over-ridden by senior management.

Azlan is raising £24.2 million to ensure its survival, with a two-for-one rights issue at 37p a share — compared with the 555p price before its shares were suspended in June.

Commentary, page 29

Fears grow over cut in pension tax relief

By Marianne Curphey

HIGHER-RATE taxpayers are being urged to pay as much as possible into pension plans before November's "green Budget" amid fears that the Government is planning to reduce relief on contributions.

Currently, people in the 40 per cent tax bracket get relief at the highest rate on all payments made into personal pensions or employers' schemes. However, many in the industry believe Gordon Brown, the Chancellor, is contemplating cutting relief to the basic rate of 23 per cent next month, and in the process raising an extra £1 billion.

Barbara Williamson, pensions director of Berry Birch & Noble, the independent financial adviser, said: "There is a 50-50 chance the Government will take action and introduce the measure from the date of the Budget. Alternatively, it could be brought in from the beginning of the next financial year. If they do so it will not motivate people to continue paying into plans."

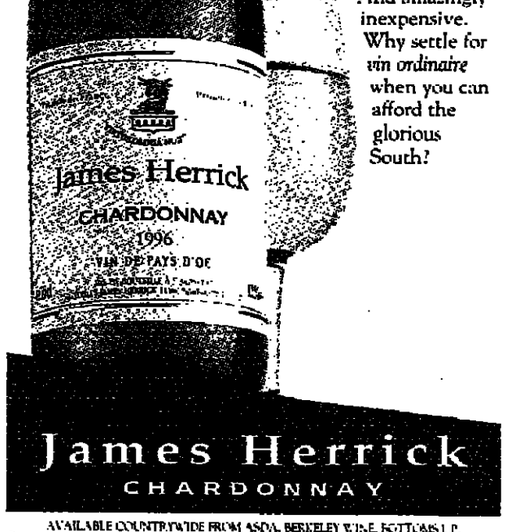
Charles Levett-Scrivener, a specialist with Towry Law, the financial adviser, said: "I am surprised such a move has not already happened. There are around 2.5 million higher-rate taxpayers who would be affected."

The Department for Social Security said: "There is a growing gap between rich and poor pensioners. However, no decision has yet been taken."

Weekend Money, page 55

If you like the sound of the South of France you'll love the taste.

A faraway look comes into people's eyes when mention is made of the South of France. For most, it is the capital of *chic*: a sun-kissed playground of exotic resorts and spectacular scenery studded with ancient vineyards - among them, *La Motta*, *La Boulandiere* and *Les Garrigues de Truilhas*, where James Herrick makes the definitive *Midi* Chardonnay. Rich, stylish and full of taste; fresh, yet fruity and long-finishing. And amazingly inexpensive. Why settle for *vin ordinaire* when you can afford the glorious South?



James Herrick
CHARDONNAY

AVAILABLE COUNTRYWIDE FROM ASDA, BERKELEY WINE BOTTOMS UP, THE CO-OP, E.H. BOOTH, ELDRIDGE POPE, EUROPA, FULLER'S, MORRISONS, OPPIDUM, RUSSELL CELLARS, SAINSBURY, SAFEWAY, SOMERFIELD, STAR, TESCO, THRESHER, UNWINS, VICTORIA WINE, WAITROSE, WINE CELLAR, WINE RACK, WOODHOUSE

A WEEK IN THE CITY

Reptiles were at large in the City this week. Big ones. Ready to pounce on unsuspecting victims. The hunting ground was the static-charged world of electronic trading, the latest milestone in the evolution of the 24-hour trading day.

The Stock Exchange took advantage of the weekend's inactivity to test its US-style trading system, due to kick in on October 20. Based on the results, it could be time to sell everything — fast.

The live simulation brought out that most repulsive of City opportunists, The Snake in the Grass. These slippery predators input orders for millions of shares, wait for a hapless victim to enter the wrong price, then strike before there is time to correct the error. Saturday's chaos included an order for £8 billion in PowerGen shares, while someone else sold Halifax shares at ½p. The Stock Exchange said that it would be fine on the day.

Less optimistic about life was that venerable iguana, Alan Greenspan, who was living up to his reputation as a modern-day Nostradamus. Nobody understands what he's talking about, but everyone panics all the same. Greenspan's gloomy musings about the US economy caused predictable chaos in London, with the FTSE 100 see-sawing on Wednesday from a high of 60.9 to end 43.5 in the red.

On Thursday, the Bundesbank's decision to raise its key money market interest rate, the repo, brought more of the same, with shares plunging 96 points at one stage.

Not yet locked in to EMU behaviour, the Bank of England's monetary policy committee decided to leave UK interest rates at 7 per cent, in spite of gloomy tidings on the inflation front. Rising mortgage costs pushed headline inflation from 3.5 per cent to 3.6 per cent, the highest for two years. Inflation has breached the Government's target for the fourth successive month since the general election.

The surprise comeback of the week fell to Liam Strong, recently of Sears, the Selfridges-to-shoes group. Ordinarily, his appointment to the board of an obscure US telecoms company would barely have raised an eyebrow. That the company was WorldCom, bidding $30 billion for MCI to scupper BT's expansion plans, made this one rather different.

Strong, who becomes chief executive of WorldCom International, confirms his reputation as a corporate chameleon, having worked with mustard and soap, airlines, shoes, and now telecoms. Paler around the gills is Sir Robert Horton, remembered for his acerbic style at British Petroleum, who quit as chairman of JKX Oil and Gas, ending what could have been an oil industry comeback. He remains chairman of Railtrack.

A collective sigh of relief at Canary Wharf when Commerzbank formerly declared itself out of the running for BZW, hurled on to the market by Barclays ten days ago.

No one in equities or corporate finance, the bits being sold, seemed particularly wild about the prospect of working for the Germans, favouring an American buyer. Big bonuses were dangled, as the list of rumoured buyers continued to grow.

The week would not be complete without one big payoff. Ray Irani, chairman of Occidental Petroleum, agreed to redraft the terms of his contract with the US oil group in return for a one-off payment of $95 million (£57 million). Enough to make the snakes hiss.

Jon Ashworth

هكذا من الإصل

Ombudsman delivers NFC pensions victory

By Gavin Lumsden

THE Pensions Ombudsman has granted an historic victory to NFC, the privatised haulage group, in a dispute over £263.7 million of pension surpluses.

This is the first time that Julian Farrand has sided with a privatised company on the issue of pension surpluses. Last year the Ombudsman ordered the National Bus Company to recover £168 million of surplus from the Government. A case between the trustee and the Department of Transport is to be heard soon.

In a test case for the electricity industry that was heard earlier this year, Dr Farrand ordered National Grid to repay £46 million of surpluses, although the decision was overturned on appeal at the High Court and a counter appeal is pending. In July of this year Dr Farrand made a similar ruling against the Industrial Training Boards.

Yesterday, however, Dr Farrand rejected a complaint from Harold Clark, a former NFC manager, who has campaigned against the merger of three NFC pension funds in 1992. By merging funds for salaried and waged staff with another fund it had established in 1988, the year before its flotation, NFC gained the right to claim for a return of surpluses. Although it has not exercised this right, it has used the surpluses to fund a contributions holiday since 1988. Yesterday NFC said it would not pay into the funds for at least another three years.

In his complaint Mr Clark accused NFC and its pension trustee of misusing surpluses arising from 1988, 1991 and 1994. He said NFC had always acted in its own interests and not those of its members. Distributions of surpluses in the form of benefit enhancements had discriminated against the fund of which he was a member, he claimed.

Dr Farrand said Mr Clark, now retired, had benefited from the merger and that companies were under no obligation to put members' interests first.

A spokesman for the Ombudsman said there had been no change of direction by Dr Farrand and that the sequence of judgments on privatised companies had been coincidental.

New York rebuffs UBS over $1bn bond deal

From Oliver August in New York

NEW YORK CITY officials have punished UBS for its role in the Nazi gold row by cutting the Swiss investment bank out of a $1 billion (£600 million) municipal bond deal.

UBS is being replaced by NatWest Markets on the deal worth several million dollars in fees, making it NatWest's biggest deal of its kind.

Alan Hevesi, the city comptroller, said the move was triggered by the bank's reluctance to help the investigation of funds deposited in Swiss bank vaults during the war. The case is believed to be the first official sanction resulting from the investigation.

Mr Hevesi said he objected to UBS earning million-dollar fees from business with the city while its Swiss directors remained unapologetic over the bank's conduct.

New York City is planning to borrow $1.075 billion against future federal and state payments for welfare and education expenditure. UBS had led the group of finance houses that organised the deal and was expected to receive half of the total fees.

Mr Hevesi asked the group to "reconfigure the team of banks to exclude UBS" and they complied, replacing it with NatWest and SocGen. Now the future involvement of UBS in New York City bond issues is uncertain. Over the past 20 years, UBS has helped the city out of several financial crises.

Mr Hevesi said: "We were faced with the decision of whether to go ahead and do business as usual or send a message to Union Bank of Switzerland. We decided it would be sending the wrong message to accept the bid."

UBS is one of the top ten banks on Wall Street with $1.7 billion in capital. Richard Capone, the US head of UBS, said: "We respect the position of the comptroller even though we do not agree with it.

"We are proud of the fact that the Swiss banks are working extremely hard and providing leadership in resolving the Second World War dormant accounts issue fairly and with sensitivity. We understand it is an emotional and complex issue, and we are committed to understanding the truth and doing what is right."

Mr Hevesi's actions were criticised by the US State Department which is trying to get Swiss banks to make large donations to Holocaust survivors. Stuart Eizenstat, the Under-Secretary of State for Economic Affairs, said New York's actions "further inflame passions in Switzerland" and insisted that "confrontation with the banks will achieve far less than co-operation".

David Norman is stepping down as chairman and chief executive of BNB Resources

BNB profits fall by 25%

By Chris Ayres

BNB RESOURCES, the recruitment and training company, yesterday blamed a 25 per cent slump in interim pretax profits from £2.4 million to £1.8 million on falling earnings at Norman Broadbent International, the group's flagship headhunting arm.

The hit on BNB's profits will compound the embarrassment caused by NBI, which has seen several key staff defect to join, or set up, rival organisations over the past two years. Senior staff who have left include Miles Broadbent, the division's cofounder, and Julian Sainty, a financial services specialist.

BNB also confirmed yesterday that David Norman had stepped down as chairman and chief executive to become non-executive chairman. Graham Durgan has been promoted to chief executive.

BNB's turnover grew by 11 per cent, from £56.3 million to £62.6 million, in the six months to June 30, while earnings per share fell 22 per cent, from 6.9p to 5.4p. An unchanged interim dividend of 2.4p will be paid on November 28.

New move to fend off Casino's predators

From Adam Sage in Paris

CASINO, the French retailer, struck an important blow in its struggle to fend off a hostile Fr31 billion (about £3.26 billion) takeover bid yesterday when it took a Fr900 million 21.4 per cent stake in the rival Monoprix chain of supermarkets.

The move was part of a three-way deal that saw Monoprix purchase the smaller Prisunic chain from the Pinault Printemps Redoute retail group for Fr1.61 bilion.

Casino is attempting to block a hostile offer from the retailer Promodes in the hope of retaining a measure of independence. The French food industry is undergoing fierce restructuring, watched with interest by Tesco, which is expected to seek a buyer for Catteau, its French supermarket chain, which is valued at between £200 million and £300 million.

Paul-Louis Halley, the Promodes chairman, reacted swiftly to the latest development in a takeover battle marked by high finance, insults, political intrigue and family squabbles. "We cannot abandon our offer," he said.

M Halley offered Fr27.8 billion for Casino last month and increased his offer by Fr3 billion this month. Rallye, the rival retailer which already owns 33 per cent of Casino's shares, responded with a white knight offer, which was welcomed by Casino's board and, initially at least, by members of the chain's founding Guichard family, who control 8 per cent of the shares and 16 per cent of the voting rights.

BUSINESS ROUNDUP

BAe in European defence venture

THE European defence industry consolidated further yesterday as British Aerospace and Lagardère of France took a joint stake in LFK, the guided-weapons subsidiary of Germany's Daimler Benz Aerospace. The two companies have taken a 30 per cent stake, 15 per cent each, through their existing Matra BAe Dynamics joint venture. The agreement is subject to regulatory approval. BAe said yesterday that the deal, announced after the London market had closed, would strengthen its position in upcoming bids, including Germany's Taurus "stand-off" missile programme and the arming of the forthcoming Eurofighter. It said the benefits to the European defence industry would come from shared marketing of an integrated product range.

LFK made a loss of DM42 million (£15 million) in 1996 on a turnover of DM884 million. The loss includes restructuring costs that BAe would not quantify yesterday. It said the business, which operates from three sites in Germany and employs 1,500 people, was now responding to these remedial measures. At the end of 1996, LFK had net assets of DM66 million.

Celsis raises £3.7m

CELSIS INTERNATIONAL, the hygiene monitoring company, has raised £3.7 million through new shares at 95p to help to fund its purchase of Scientific Associates, a US contract testing laboratory in St Louis, Missouri. The £4.4 million purchase and a new alliance with Cadbury Schweppes are the latest moves in an attempt to win market acceptance for its rapid contamination detection monitors. Scientific made a pre-tax profit of $600,000 (£370,000) on sales of $6.9 million in the year to September 30.

Chrysler earnings drop

CHRYSLER, the US automotive company, said higher incentives, market share losses and model changeovers in the summer caused a 35 per cent drop in third-quarter earnings. But the results exceeded Wall Street estimates, and Chrysler moved to appease shareholders by saying it will buy back another $2 billion worth of stock by the end of 1998. Chrysler earned $441 million, or 65 cents a share, during the July to September period, down from $680 million, or 93 cents a share, a year earlier.

Lloyds TSB agreement

A BILL paving the way for the full integration of Lloyds Bank and TSB is expected to be passed next year after banking unions agreed to withdraw two petitions containing amendments. Lloyds TSB, formed via the merger of the two banks in 1995, has agreed with LTU and BIFU that it will recognise them in negotiations on "harmonised" terms and conditions for staff. Passage of the Bill will enable the banks to become one legal entity. This will mean that its customer databases can be integrated, giving more opportunity to cross-sell financial products.

Forest slips on debut

SHARES of Nottingham Forest, the football club, closed at 61p yesterday, their first day of trading, against the 70p offer price. The shares trade on the Alternative Investment Market. Nottingham Forest, relegated last season, hopes to make a prompt return to the Premiership and the stock market flotation was to provide funds to strengthen the playing squad. Some five million shares were put up by the club, and only 3.7 million were actually applied for. Leicester City is the next club to head for the stock market on October 24.

Link-up lifts Tradepoint

SHARES in Tradepoint, the electronic market set up to win business from the London Stock Exchange, rose more than 12 per cent yesterday on news that the company has linked up with the leading trading software suppliers to big investment banks. It has signed a deal that will enable users of Royalblue's fidessa software to access Tradepoint on the same screen as London Stock Exchange trading. The shares, which have risen sharply in recent months on the back of a refinancing and boardroom changes, rose 15p to 136½p.

Waterman's record year

WATERMAN PARTNERSHIP, the consulting engineer, raised pre-tax profits by 62 per cent to £1.08 million in the year to June 30. The total dividend rises from 1.2p to 1.85p out of earnings up from 2.6p to 4p. Bob Campbell, managing director, said: "This has been a record year for the group in volume terms, with excellent and sustainable growth in work done and in profits. Our order book continues to grow and now stands at a record level. Waterman has improved margins over the year."

Innovative chief leaves

INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGIES, the wound-dressing company, has parted with its founders, the husband and wife team of Keith Gilding and Diane Mitchell. Mr Gilding has been replaced as chief executive by Roy Smith, the former Johnson & Johnson executive who joined Innovative in April and took control of the woundcare business only last month. Innovative has struggled to make sales. Mr Smith said that Mr Gilding had shown tremendous entrepreneurial drive, but the company needed to focus on commercialising its products.

Hewetson buoyant

HEWETSON, the building materials group, yesterday said its first-half profits would be above market expectations. The shares rose 9½p to 108½p in response. Hewetson said trading in the first six months to September 30 has been buoyant, with significantly improved margins over the same period last year. Interim profits will be "higher than market expectations and substantially higher than those achieved in 1996". Hewetson said that it plans to announce its interim results on November 5.

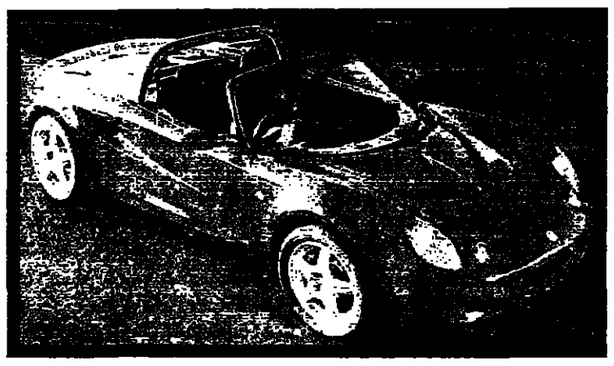
A TIMES NEWSPAPERS PRIZE DRAW THE TIMES

FOUR FABULOUS CARS TO BE WON

Give the dog a phone Churchill car insurance 0800 200 380

This week *The Times* has teamed up with *The Sunday Times* and Churchill Insurance, to offer readers the chance to win one of four exciting cars. Each one reflects a different lifestyle and is worth more than £20,000.

The waiting list for the Lotus Elise, pictured, stretches an incredible 18 months but we have acquired one for a lucky reader. He or she will be ushered into an exclusive band of drivers privileged enough to own a sports car with pedigree as well as performance. It is technically innovative with fabulous styling and incredible handling and has scored more plaudits from more pundits than almost any sports car.



HOW TO ENTER

Simply collect 10 differently numbered tokens from *The Times* and two differently numbered tokens from *The Sunday Times*. Tokens will be published daily until Sunday, November 2. Attach your tokens to the entry form which will be published on Saturday. Entries must be received by the closing date, Monday, November 10, 1997

No purchase necessary. You can obtain bonus tokens and an entry form by sending a stamped sae to: *The Times*/Churchill's Token Request, PO Box 5077 Leighton Buzzard LU7 7GD. A maximum of three bonus tokens per sae permitted, requests must be received by November 1, 1997

THE TIMES/CHURCHILL INSURANCE PRIZE DRAW ENTRY FORM

THE TIMES CHURCHILL INSURANCE PRIZE DRAW *TOKEN 6*

Send this form with the necessary number of differently numbered tokens to arrive by Monday, November 10, 1997, to: The Times/Churchill Insurance Prize Draw, PO Box 5078, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 7GB.

Title ..... First name .....
Surname .....
Address .....
..... Postcode .....
Day tel .....
Insurance renewal date .....

1. Which of the following age groups do you fall into? (Please tick box) 15-24 [1] 25-34 [2] 35-44 [3] 45-54 [4] 55-64 [5] 65+ [6]
2. Which national daily newspaper(s) do you buy regularly (4-6 copies each week)?
2. Which national daily newspaper(s) do you buy occasionally (3 copies or less)?
4. Which national Sunday newspaper(s) do you buy regularly (2-4 copies a month)?
If you would prefer not to receive information and offers from organisations carefully selected by Times Newspapers/Churchill Insurance, please tick ☐

Terms and Conditions 1 Entrants must be 18 or over. 2 You can enter the prize draw as many times as you wish. Each entry must be on an official entry form (no photocopies accepted) accompanied by 10 differently numbered tokens from The Times and two differently numbered tokens from The Sunday Times. 3 Entry forms will be published in The Times on October 11, 13, 18, 20, 25 and 27 and in The Sunday Times on October 19, 26 and November 2. 4 Tokens will be printed daily in The Times between October 6 and November 1. Four tokens will be printed in The Sunday Times, one each week, between October 12 and November 2. 5 Entries must be received by Monday November 10, 1997. 6 Winners will be drawn at random from all correct entries received. 7 Staff of Times Newspapers Ltd and Churchill Management Ltd and their families or agents are not permitted to enter. 8 The prizes do not include insurance or road tax. 9 There is no cash alternative and prizes must be accepted as offered. Winners cannot specify the car they wish to receive. 10 The cars will be delivered to the winners' homes in the UK only. 11 The Golf VR6 and Renault Espace will be available on December 1, 1997, the Lotus Elise in January 1998 and the Land Rover Freelander in February 1998. 12 No purchase necessary. You can obtain bonus tokens and an entry form by sending a stamped sae to: The Times/Churchill's Token Request, PO Box 5077, Leighton Buzzard, LU7 7GD. A maximum of three bonus tokens per sae permitted, requests must be received by November 1, 1997. 13 You can collect the tokens each day in person (Mon-Fri) from News International, 1 Virginia St, London E1 9XN or 124, Portman St, Kinning Park, Glasgow G41. 14 Winners will be notified by November 30, 1997. 15 Normal TNL rules apply, available by sending a stamped sae to the token request address above marked Prize-draw Rules. 16 Promoter: TNL, 1 Pennington St, E1 9XN

CHANGING TIMES

Ulster TV move pleases Scottish

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

SCOTTISH MEDIA is privately pleased that CanWest Global Communications has raised its stake in Ulster Television to 7.4 per cent.

The stake-building by the Canadian-owned company, which is barred from taking control of Ulster TV because it is a non-European Union company, is being seen as helping to keep Ulster on ice for Scottish, the television and newspaper group.

Scottish now holds more than 18 per cent in Ulster TV and there is little doubt that it would like to take control as long as it does not have to overpay.

Directors recently bought 11 per cent of Ulster TV to help to ensure that any potential purchaser would have to pay what they saw as a fair value for the ITV company. Their stake is now worth almost £15 million.

The Scottish view is that with more than 36 per cent of the company held by three groups of shareholders it would not be easy for an external predator to swoop.

At the very least Scottish wants to ensure that one of the three large ITV groups, Carlton, Granada and United News & Media, is not able to consolidate their power by swallowing Ulster.

Scottish sees Ulster TV as a way of reaching the all-Ireland advertising market.

Prices data rattles Wall Street

By Janet Bush
Economics Editor

WALL STREET ended a difficult week with another negative shock in the form of a much larger than expected rise in producer prices in September.

The US producer prices index rose 0.5 per cent, more than twice the 0.2 per cent rise anticipated by economists, and the biggest rise since last December. Core producer prices, which exclude food and energy, rose 0.4 per cent. Core prices had risen by only 0.1 per cent in August.

The Dow Jones industrial average fell 50 points at the opening in reaction, but later clawed back some of its losses.

The market regained its poise as analysts noted that the increase in producer prices was largely down to steep rises in the prices of tobacco and passenger vehicles, regarded as one-offs.

The markets remain hypersensitive to any signs of incipient inflation after Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, spoke of the danger of price pressures re-emerging as unemployment falls further.

Sweden opts for delay over EMU

By Janet Bush
Economics Editor

SWEDEN yesterday formally ruled out joining a single currency in the first wave, currently scheduled for January 1, 1999.

The minority Social Democratic government proposed that the door should be left open for membership at a later date but said the question of economic and monetary union would be decided in a referendum.

But Sweden's Conservative opposition party called for the crown to be linked to the European Exchange Rate Mechanism as soon as possible to pave the way for membership of EMU, preferably at the start of 1999.

☐ Ian Plenderleith, executive director of the Bank of England, told a seminar in Paris that City preparations for the euro were well under way and that the advent of the single currency would be an opportunity rather than threat for London as a financial centre.

He said that firms had not been deterred by uncertainty over Britain's position on the single currency.

TOURIST RATES

	Bank Buys	Bank Sells
Australia $	2.31	2.13
Austria Sch	20.99	19.33
Belgium Fr	61.79	56.83
Canada $	2.362	2.174
Cyprus CypE	0.885	0.814
Denmark Kr	11.41	10.52
Finland Mkk	9.06	8.31
France Fr	10.01	9.23
Germany Dm	3.01	2.76
Greece Dr	475	436
Hong Kong $	13.37	12.17
Iceland	126	108
Ireland Pt	1.16	1.06
Israel Shk	5.97	5.32
Italy Lira	2975	2738
Japan Yen	209.53	192.00
Malta	0.665	0.606
Netherlds Gld	3.383	3.098
New Zealand $	2.67	2.43
Norway Kr	12.01	11.07
Portugal Esc	301.03	279.00
S Africa Rd	8.28	7.33
Spain Pta	250.79	232.00
Sweden Kr	13.10	12.00
Switzerland Fr	2.52	2.30
Turkey Lira	294210	274352
USA $	1.728	1.585

Rates for small denomination bank notes only as supplied by Barclays Bank PLC. Different rates apply to traveller's cheques. Rates as at close of trading yesterday.

THE SUNDAY TIMES

"Who runs British business? The first comprehensive study, of 14,000 company directors and senior managers — their educational, professional and recreational background — reveals some surprising answers . . ."

An exclusive survey, in The Sunday Times Business, tomorrow

Nomura wins Hands down

COMMENTARY
by our City Editor

George Walker's reputation as a fighter goes beyond his early days in the boxing ring. Even as the struggle to sort out the commercial disaster he created went into its final round, he was leaping into the ring, trying to dissuade Nomura from buying the William Hill betting shops.

But Nomura's Guy Hands was not to be deterred, even by the pugnacious Mr Walker. The deal was done and, with its completion, Brent Walker, George Walker's corporate folly, was effectively consigned to oblivion. The company can now be wound up, the fate that Mr Walker had wanted to postpone while he continued with audacious efforts to sue the business through the French courts.

A defunct company will take no heed of whatever conclusion the French judiciary reaches in Mr Walker's claim for damages from the company he founded but which was, eventually, driven to sack him. Shareholders may see some justice in this, since their share certificates are now officially worthless. Even though the company's annual reports had screamed that there would be nothing left for ordinary shareholders after the dismemberment, there were still some naive enough to hope.

But the bankers who backed Mr Walker's ambitions will get back very much more than they could have expected, thanks to the efforts of Sir Brian Goswell, the chairman, and John Leach, chief executive. Mr Leach arrived at Brent Walker six years ago with the intention of spending six months helping a hit squad to put things to rights. It has taken him rather longer, but yesterday he was delighted to have done himself out of a job.

The two main banking creditors, Standard Chartered and Lloyds TSB, have not rushed him and have benefited from the wait. In line with the old maxim, Brent Walker's debts of over £1 billion ensured that it received rather better treatment than a company in hock for just a few thousand. Instead of some upstart regional manager pulling the rug out from under at the first sign of trouble, this case received the personal attention of Malcolm Williamson and Sir Brian Pitman. Their approach has meant that, instead of being run down and pushed into a fire sale, William Hill has been sold as a strong business with a price to match. Perhaps the two bank chiefs should give a tutorial to some of their lowlier staff on the merits of this approach?

We have yet to learn of Mr Hands's plans for the business, beyond finding investors prepared to take on the securitised William Hill. He might consider parcelling his huge assortment of pubs with his newly acquired betting shops to create an investment that some Sids might find irresistible.

But Nomura's success does raise questions over another leisure business. Bass, barred from taking over Carlsberg Tetley, had examined William Hill as a complement to its Coral bookmaking business. Where will Sir Ian Prosser look next?

The witch in Azlan's wardrobe

Besides being the name of a company boasting of being Europe's largest supplier of equipment and training for computer networks, Azlan was the name of the lion in *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*, CS Lewis's children's classic. A thorough spring-cleaning of Azlan's wardrobe has produced a very scary witch indeed.

As a lesson in what happens when a business runs out of control, it will take some beating. The litany of failings that runs through yesterday's mammoth statement of the company's position is extraordinary. A long list of basic accounting errors adds up to a lack of financial controls, a failure to apply those that existed, and, worst of all, a willingness to override checks that produced inconvenient numbers. So instead of the £15.1 million profit the company imagined it had made in April, last year's trading actually produced a loss of £14.1 million. Azlan was seemingly so desperate to meet its City forecasts that it stopped bothering to pay its suppliers for the rapidly accumulating stocks.

Some indication of the scale of the "serious neglect . . . [possible] acts of concealments and improper behaviour" is the fact that Azlan has disciplined, warned or accepted resignations from 18 people. Meeting all those unpaid bills would have forced Azlan into receivership but for the support of SBC Warburg Dillon Read. To carry on, it needs to raise £24.2 million in a rights issue pitched at an astonishing 93 per cent discount to the previous market price of the shares. Discounts cannot come much deeper.

The largest share of the blame for this catastrophe must rest with Adrian Lamb, the former finance director who seems to have been hopelessly out of his depth but is hanging on to the £33,333 bonus he took in May in recognition of the company's supposed achievement of its targets. This fallacy started to fall apart as soon as Mr Lamb was replaced by Peter Bartram.

Although Azlan's management accounts were clearly misleading, it is hard to believe that they contained no warning signals for the non-executive directors, headed by Michael Brooke.

The Azlan affair also calls into question the worth of auditors' reviews of interim results. KPMG, whose forensic team have now dug up all this dirt, failed to spot the flaws last November. Will the firm now feel inclined to hand back part of its fee? It is not good enough just to make sure the columns of figures add up, if the figures themselves are based on wishful thinking.

Nothing new at NewRo

There is something depressingly familiar about the new face of City regulation. Apart from the presence at its helm of Howard Davies, himself merely moved over from the Bank of England, the new super-regulator is simply taking the old regulators and giving them new job titles.

This may be enough to turn a system that has been oft castigated for its ineffectualness into a sharp new policeforce for the financial markets, but a dash of new blood would have been so much more exciting.

Given the scale of the task involved, a chief executive with a proven track record in running large organisations might have been a useful addition to the panel of regulatory professionals who will now line up below Mr Davies's chairmanship.

The bearded Richard Farrant apparently believes that his experience in shaping the Securities and Futures Authority will fully equip him to be chief operating officer of the new authority.

The City, and Mr Davies, will have to hope that he is right because putting together the people and the systems to equip the new authority will be a huge job. The City itself is already divided as to how NewRo will be staffed, some favouring secondments from the industry, while others see worrying possibilities for conflicts of interest in such a structure.

One outsider in the team might have brought fresh thinking to such quandaries, but it is not to be.

BNB poser

DAVID NORMAN'S decision to become non-executive rather than executive chairman of BNB Resources, where profits are sliding, begs two questions. First, if other firms followed his and merely promoted the managing director in such circumstances, what would happen to headhunting firms such as his Norman Broadbent International subsidiary. And secondly, will his generous profit share in NBI survive his change in status?

Retailers jockey for lead in home deliveries

By Sarah Cunningham

J SAINSBURY is changing its strategy on home deliveries by severing its link with Flanagans, the independent company that delivers Sainsbury's groceries to doorsteps around southwest London.

From now on, Sainsbury's intends to concentrate on in-house development of its services within the increasingly competitive home deliveries market. A spokeswoman for the supermarket group said that the Flanagans' link did not fit in with Sainsbury's own plans.

Flanagans said it will carry on with its business and still has plans to extend its delivery range to north London.

Tesco, Sainsbury's arch-rival, which has overtaken it as Britain's largest supermarket group, is also investing heavily in home delivery trials in parts of London and may extend them to cover the whole of the capital.

If these are a success, it may then go nationwide with the doorstep service, which costs £5 a time.

Other supermarket groups, including Safeway and Iceland, are also experimenting with variations on grocery home deliveries. Iceland is extending its service in Edinburgh and the North East of England to include a £4 delivery that can be ordered by phone or fax.

According to Paul Smiddy, food retail analyst at Credit Lyonnais Laing, "Home delivery is one of those areas where none of the major British groups wants to be left out. But the problem is that while the cost of taking orders has fallen, the cost of delivery hasn't."

Sainsbury's itself is conducting trials of two projects — order and collect and home delivery — in Watford and Solihull. It is also working on an electronic shop with Hewlett-Packard, the computer company, and on a personal computer based ordering system.

Like Safeway, it is also in talks with British Interactive Broadcasting about using interactive television as a platform for selling its groceries.

Dominick Scott-Flanagan, joint chief executive of Flanagans, said that the decision to end the link with Sainsbury's had been reached amicably and by mutual agreement. "It will be a phased process, and will finally cease in March," he said.

Flanagan's has been delivering products supplied by Sainsbury's — although no own-label Sainsbury's goods — for two years for a £4 charge.

The company has recently joined a buying consortium to ensure continuity of supply. Mr Scott-Flanagan said that customers will notice no change in the service, which is based on a catalogue, and that Flanagans still plans to expand across London next year.

Flanagans, which is based in Wandsworth, is run by Mr Scott-Flanagan and Adrian Flanagan, his brother. The company ran into difficulties last year and had to be refinanced by private investors.

Tesco's trial is currently running at six of its stores in Hammersmith, Lea Valley, Leeds, Osterley, Romford and Sutton. Tesco also uses the Internet for home shopping, with its own "Internet superstore".

Standley: the board has recommended acceptance but the way is open for a rival offer

Appleyard sale creates biggest motor retailer

By Chris Ayres

THE motor retail industry braced itself for a significant shake-up yesterday when Appleyard, the struggling Harrogate dealer, received an agreed £53 million offer from Jardine International Motor Holdings.

Appleyard's deal with JIMH, a subsidiary of Jardine Matheson, the multibillion-pound Hong Kong conglomerate, will create Britain's biggest motor retailing group, with estimated annual sales of £1.3 billion. The moves comes as many other motor retailers, including Henlys and Lex Service, are selling their dealerships in response to the increasingly harsh demands of manufacturers. They are switching to industries with higher margins, and where they have more contol over their businesses.

Appleyard's current dealerships, which sell both middle-market and volume brands, including Audi and Vauxhall, will initially be run separately from JIMH's upmarket Lancaster business. Lancaster currently holds franchises for Jaguar, Porsche, Ferrari and BMW.

JIMH's bid comes after a period of intense turmoil for Appleyard, which has struggled to keep its franchises after failing to integrate acquisitons. The company was also recently hit by a fraud scandal. Shares in Appleyard have fluctuated wildly since rumours of potential takeover bids began.

Peter Ward, chief executive of JIMH, said he planned to spend three months reviewing Appleyard's current businesses and management. "The problems Appleyard has experienced so far have not necessarily been caused by the management," he said.

"I am hoping we are going to find talented management already in the company. I think it would be unrealistic to see the company turned around in a few months. I would say a year at least."

Appleyard, which made pre-tax losses of £5.1 million last year, saw its shares surge 12½p to 78½p yesterday. JIMH's bid for Appleyard values its shares at 80p each, a 21.2 per cent premium on yeaterday's closing price. JIMH has so far secured 25.6 per cent of Appleyard's share capital.

Tempus, page 31

DMGT expands radio empire

By Raymond Snoddy, Media Editor

DAILY MAIL and General Trust has spent nearly £40 million in expanding its commercial radio empire in Australia.

The publisher of the *Daily Mail* has acquired Regional Broadcasters Australia, the holding company for the radio assets of Rural Press which runs 25 AM and FM radio stations and has licences for additional FM stations. The stations are in towns such as Cairns and Kalgoorlie and are mainly in regional Queensland and Western Australia. The total cash price is A$88 million (£39 million). DMG Radio Australia's existing radio interests are mainly in Victoria and New South Wales.

DMG Radio Australia was formed 18 months ago to make significant investments in the Australian radio industry.

With the new deal the group can claim it owns the largest number of commercial radio stations in Australia, present in a total of 29 markets. The current portfolio of 20 AM and FM stations will now expand to 55 stations, including 10 FM licensed to go on air in the next few months.

As well as developing the regional network DMG Radio plans to apply for licences in the main metropolitan areas when they become available.

Charlie Cox, chairman of DMG Radio Australia, said yesterday: "DMG Radio is committed to the development of a significant presence in the Australian broadcasting industry."

Advertising agencies 'out of step'

NIALL FITZGERALD, chairman of Unilever, yesterday attacked advertising agencies for failing to keep up with communication technologies (Raymond Snoddy writes).

Mr FitzGerald told the European Association of Advertising Agencies in Dublin that there was "an alarming discrepancy" developing between what Unilever brands were going to want and what contemporary agencies were good at.

He said that simple one-way communication, such as network television, had its best and biggest days behind it. Already fast-moving consumer goods manufacturers were starting to find the Internet a personal, cheap and effective brand medium, he added.

Peek backs £98m takeover bid

By Martin Barrow

PEEK, the supplier of traffic control equipment, is recommending a £98 million takeover bid by Thermo Power, a rival American company.

The cash offer of 80p a share is almost double yesterday's closing price of 42p a share but at a significant discount to the 12-month high of 107½p, struck almost a year ago. David Walsh, who became chairman in May after the ousting of Ken Maud, said the offer "represents good value" for Peek shareholders.

Peek shares fell sharply after a profits warning in April, when it said it was likely to incur a £1.5 million first-half loss due to deferred orders. In the first half of the previous year the company had earned £4 million and the City anticipated steady growth, supported by investment in traffic management systems in the UK and the rest of Europe. In its last financial year Peek, whose chief executive is Allen Standley, earned pre-tax profits of £12.6 million on a turnover of a little more than £162 million.

Yesterday's offer was announced after the close of trading. Although the Peek board, which is advised by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell, has recommended the offer, Thermo and existing directors only speak for about 2.9 per cent of the equity, leaving the way open for a rival offer. Mr Maud speaks for about 3.2 million shares, or around 2.5 per cent, through family trusts.

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Founder suggests full-time position as Wall St prepares for slim pickings

Jobs turns up heat on Apple role

From Oliver August in New York

Jobs: spiritual leader

STEVE JOBS, the founder of Apple Computer and currently its interim chief executive, surprised Silicon Valley by suggesting he could become full-time chief executive.

Apple had been on the brink of hiring Sam Palmisano, a senior executive and heir apparent at IBM, for the job but Mr Jobs is said to be the only person capable of saving the ailing computer company.

He told an industry conference to expect an announcement on dropping the "interim" from his title after a holiday to Hawaii where he plans to "walk on the beach and think about it".

This summer, Mr Jobs ousted Gil Amelio, the previous chief executive, after his return to the company he co-founded in 1976. His latest remarks are seen as a testing of investors' opinions on his full return. Tim Bajarin, president of Creative Strategies, said: "The more we look at the situation, most of us have come to see that maybe he is the only guy who can save Apple. It appears there is a dilemma. Steve's role is as a spiritual leader and practical leader."

Mr Jobs's remarks will have undermined the search for an outside chief executive and will make his full-time appointment almost inevitable. His tendency to interfere and his continued interest in day-to-day operations is likely to dismay candidates such as Mr Palmisano. As someone who has worked all his life in a huge corporation, Mr Palmisano is said to be lacking Mr Jobs's maverick, feisty style needed to turn around Apple, a company whose new advertising slogan is "Think different".

Next week, Wall Street expects Apple to announce quarterly losses of 14 cents per share, compared with a six cents profit last year. Mr Jobs has made plain his desire to return the company to profit. He said: "We will be doing some very, very innovative things in distribution in the next 90 days."

هكذا من الإصل

Chief sails Stock Exchange into a brave, new world

Gavin Casey really is in the hottest seat in town. This weekend the London Stock Exchange chief executive will be at his workplace again, managing a final dress rehearsal for the biggest, most controversial, change to City share trading for 200 years.

It is the sixth weekend that Casey and City workers have spent in the Square Mile testing to destruction a new system that has caused more blood and tears than any of its other revolutions, and cost many millions of pounds.

D-Day is October 20. That is when the 281 member firms switch from the present quote-driven system to a central order book for trading the top FTSE 100 stocks. For the layman, the order book should allow investors to chose how, and at what price, they want an order executed far more efficiently than today.

Casey calls it only the start to an evolutionary process for share trading, not a Big Bang 2. "The book gives us the technology to adapt trading as the market sees fit," he says. "It could change again in five or ten years' time because we have the platform now to do this. It is like a Model T Ford which we will keep adapting and adding new products to."

Buying and selling shares will be more transparent, and cheaper for private clients and big investors because it lowers spreads and should make London even more competitive.

If Casey pulls this off, as he seems about to do, he will be the toast of the dealing rooms, rather than hurled from the Stock Exchange like predecessors who fell foul of the powerful cartels and dinosaurs that prowled its corridors.

Let us not forget that Casey is the fourth chief executive in less than a decade. All three of his predecessors were sacked because they had run their own personal agendas, rather than find a consensus for all the market users.

How has Casey achieved such apparent harmony? "I know it is not sexy, but consultation and more consultation is the answer," he says. "That is what I have done from the beginning. I like to get on with the job. I am a manager."

Casey sacrificed a top-flight, bonus-inflated salary package to take on his managerial role, but he had banked a tidy sum from the sale of Smith New Court to Merrill Lynch, a cushion of comfort from which to try something new.

"When I started, I did not have a view about whether it should be an order book or the quote-driven system," he says. "I started talking to every single constituency — all the users, private investors, the corporates and the institutions to find out what they wanted. We published our views, got the feedback, and published that. We put those into the design."

IN THE HOT SEAT

GAVIN CASEY: CV

Born 1949
Chartered accountant, Harmood Banner & Co
1970 Coopers & Lybrand
1972 County Bank
1983 Deputy chief executive, County NatWest
1989 Group finance director, Smith New Court
1996 Chief executive, London Stock Exchange

There is another reason. When Casey was chosen for the job 14 months ago, the joke in the City's black-humoured dealing rooms was "Gavin Who?". Apart from this relatively small City circle, Casey has stayed invisible to the wider world. That is just how he wants it.

He has been obsessive about keeping out of the headlines, imposing a Trappist discipline on his press corps and senior executives not to talk other than about the new system.

This was the right strategy and has endeared him to the City's bosses, who prefer not to find their affairs splashed across the breakfast table. It is also due to his diplomacy that they, too, have not seen fit to leak their battles to the press.

Casey has been lucky, too, because most of the big battles were thrashed out before he joined. There have been compromises to reach the status quo. Market-makers have been sweetened, and they will be allowed to trade off the order book if the deal is eight times larger than the average market size. Casey says that his Merrill Lynch Smith New Court market-making background has had no influence on his decision. Surprisingly, others tend to agree.

Once the system goes live, Casey may go more public. He has other fish to fry — insider dealers who escape punishment even though his surveillance men record every share trade detail. "We are in talks with the relevant authorities to see how we can improve dealing with these people," he says.

Keeping London ahead in Europe is another challenge as Frankfurt and Paris talk more about merging. "London is the centre of gravity," Casey says. "More capital is invested here than other European centres. We do have many advantages, but we must ensure that we give the industry what it wants. That is an ongoing process."

Casey does not believe that the exchange will wither away in favour of alternative electronic dealing, say via the Internet. Nor does he believe that if the exchange did not exist there would be no need to invent it.

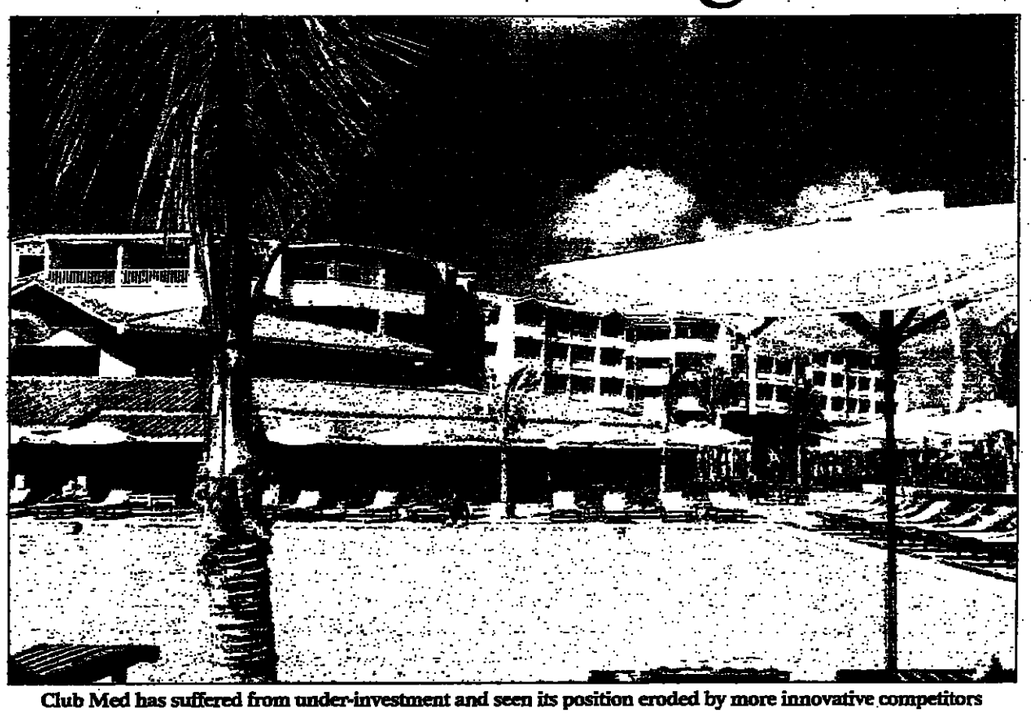
"Often in life the more things change, the more they stay the same," he says. "Most people are more comfortable in a central market, with rules of engagement. Dealers want to be able to take a position to lay off risk." After all — without risk, there is no capital.

MARGARETA PAGANO

Gavin Casey is transforming City share dealing

Club Med seeks brighter image

Dominic Walsh on moves to put new life into the travel group and win back a younger clientele



Club Med has suffered from under-investment and seen its position eroded by more innovative competitors

Club Méditerranée, pioneer of the all-inclusive sun, sea and sex holiday, has never been far from the headlines during its 47 years. Armed robberies, staff strikes and, in 1992, the death of 30 Club Med holidaymakers in an air crash in Senegal, have sometimes contrived to disturb the company's credo "happiness is our business". But 1997 will surely go down as this Gallic institution's *annus horribilis*.

In July, still reeling from big financial losses and a management shake-up, Club Med was exposed in court for compiling secret records on its customers' financial status, behaviour, and even their standards of hygiene.

The controversial practice emerged after a woman who had been on a Club Med holiday with a male friend returned home to find her husband had filed for divorce. In court, the man's solicitor said that his client had found out about the affair after gaining access to the holiday group's computer records.

It seems special codes were used on guest history files to alert staff to a customer's perceived peccadilloes. For example, an M against a name meant an unreliable payer, while an I would indicate someone with a predilection for affairs and other anti-social behaviour such as drunkenness, mental instability or a criminal record.

The company's reported response was breathtaking. It admitted it had made a mistake in allowing details of the affair to be passed to someone outside the company, but said it had no plans to stop compiling information. It added: "We need to know about our customers. Some are causing problems and getting Club Med into trouble because they are behaving like naughty boys and girls."

Just days later, the strained relationship between the founding Trigano family and Philippe Bourguignon, the former chairman of EuroDisney brought in to turn round Club Med's fortunes, erupted into open warfare. Gilbert Trigano, the veteran co-founder of the company, and his son, Serge, who was shunted aside as chief executive in February to make way for M Bourguignon, resigned from the company's supervisory board, hinting that they might set up a rival holiday group.

Unable to hide his disdain for M Bourguignon's background, Serge Trigano argued that Club Med villages were in danger of turning into "Mickey [Mouse] Clubs". He added: "We are leaving because it is no longer our club and the soul we wanted to give it has gone. It will be a different club from the past, and it is not my club. There is no place for a Trigano."

M Bourguignon, however, can draw comfort from the view of one veteran executive who said yesterday that the departure of the Triganos was long overdue. "The company was due for a clean-up. The things that are happening are only what is happening with other companies. Some of these things were already in motion, but are simply being speeded up. After Philippe Bourguignon arrived we were all expecting the Triganos to move on. You can only have one captain of a ship."

The group's interim results, announced earlier this month, show the extent of the task that M Bourguignon faces. It reported a loss of Fr413 million after one-off charges relating mainly to restructuring costs and asset writedowns and M Bourguignon gave a warning that further provisions would be taken in the second half of the year.

In many ways, the problems of Club Med are similar to those of Butlin's, whose parent company, the Rank Group, recently unveiled plans for a £139 million revamp. Although the two holiday operators are targeted at different markets, both have suffered from under-investment and have seen their positions eroded by more innovative and cost-conscious competitors. As with Butlin's, whose famous Redcoats bear a passing resemblance to Club Med's *Gentil Organisateurs*, the question that has had to be addressed is whether the concept is capable of being revived, or whether it has passed its sell-by date.

While analysts remain sceptical of Rank's ability to bring Butlin's into the 21st century, the view is positive on the more sophisticated offering of Club Med. One analyst said: "The arrival of Bourguignon is great news for Club Med. The Club Med brand still has a tremendous amount of value, but needs a good kick up the arse. The new management face the delicate task of bringing the concept right up to date while retaining the ethos that made it successful in the first place." First and foremost is the requirement to sort out the portfolio of 110 locations — about 20 of which are ski resorts — by closing the older ones and upgrading others. The company has said that three resorts are to be closed or sold. It is also expected to dispose of about 15 sites over the next few years. Details of the refurbishment programme and the future direction for marketing and operations will be revealed next month.

Philippe Bourguignon: brought in to turn round Club Med

A Paris-based analyst who recently holidayed at the Club Med on the Greek island of Kos said lack of consistency and a chaotic booking system were the main problems facing the company. "They still have some of the older hippy-type places they started with, whereas there are many like Kos which are very smart, four-star properties," he said. "But it's not cheap. For a family of four, including two children under six, the cost of two weeks in peak season came to more than £4,500 all in. It was a great holiday, and it included everything from flights to food and drink to watersports, but that's actually a lot of money. The perception that they're expensive compared to the flight and accommodation-only packages is also something they've got to address."

That becomes more crucial if, as the company claims, it wants to win back a younger clientele. Last year, its 1.4 million visitors — or *gentils membres* as customers are referred to — had an average age of 38, but the aim is to bring that average down as it attempts to hit a target of two million by the year 2000.

To achieve those goals, it has adopted a more aggressive marketing strategy and its recent advertising campaigns have moved away from the "happiness" approach to slogans such as "start living".

The French financial community clearly has confidence in M Bourguignon. Since the announcement of his appointment the share price on the Paris Bourse has risen from a low of Fr311 to a high earlier this month of just over Fr500. Then in April, Exor, the French investment vehicle controlled by Italy's Agnelli family, raised its stake to 19 per cent.

The company has come a long way since 1950 when, in the company's own words, Club Med members "spent their days frolicking in the Mediterranean sea and their nights sleeping under army surplus tents supplied by the Trigano family".

Shareholders are hoping that M Bourguignon can complete its transformation. If he cannot, Club Med's 47-year history of independence may yet be cut short.

Touch of Gallic flair to nourish language of fun

Alasdair Murray rumbas to Cuba's lively rendition of a Mediterranean-style resort

Philippe Bourguignon is determined to prove that Club Med is still fun. As the Cuban carnival procession winds its way around the resort's swimming pool, he is first out of his chair to dance salsa. The next evening, Club Med's new chief executive pops up in a disco show worthy of Andrew Lloyd Webber, sporting a mammoth quiff and drainpipe jeans. He participates in every event with the enthusiasm of a young *GO* — Club Med's very French version of a Butlin's Redcoat.

M Bourguignon is able to pull off the performance. His diminutive size — his wife towers over him on the dance floor — lends him a natural air of comedy. His disarming honesty and genuinely informal approach when conducting more serious business have ensured his popularity among both his staff and the French financial community. By the end of the weekend trip to celebrate Club Med's new opening in Cuba, even the most embittered member of the European press corps is at least feigning enjoyment.

> The image has been blurred. We need to rediscover an older and simpler style

The Varadero resort, situated on Cuba's north coast, is the first to open under M Bourguignon's leadership and the company's first foray into Cuba. The site has all the trappings that holidaymakers have come to expect of Club Med — spotless white sandy beach, pristine swimming pool, endless food and drink. The company has invested heavily in the rooms and other facilities to establish the resort as a model for the future and to escape the perception of Club Med as old-fashioned and spartan.

The vast rooms are decked out in primary colours and comfy modern furniture. The sports facilities are state-of-the-art, with the company in the process of constructing one of Cuba's few golf courses near by. Best of all is the petanque pitch, set among a glade of tropical trees, where visitors can while away the hours until dinner — *Mojito* in hand — playing France's most civilised sport.

M Bourguignon believes that these ingredients are essential to re-establishing Club Med's appeal. "Club Med has the potential to become the first real brand in the holiday business," he explains. "But the image had become blurred. It is like an old house where you need to strip away the top cover of paint to rediscover an older and simpler style." He argues that the company has spread itself too thinly across its 100-plus sites. Three clubs have been sold and M Bourguignon has been quick to pull out of non-core activities such as its Pacific cruise business.

This is not to imply a period of retrenchment. But expansion will be concentrated on existing sites where Club Med can either upgrade facilities or build a second resort near by, which can use the same distribution channels. He is also keen to tackle the thorny issue of language. He accepts that France and other French-speaking countries will remain the company's core market but a better performance in the "strategic" English-speaking markets, especially the US, is vital to the long-term future. M Bourguignon is also keen to look for joint ventures and alliances to improve penetration in these markets.

"In the headquarters not enough people speak English," he says. "It creates inhibition." But while imposing a dual-language requirement at the Paris HQ is relatively straightforward, sorting out language problems on the ground is less easy. In a rare stumble, M Bourguignon begins by suggesting that all resorts should work in English and French before correcting himself to add that there would still have to be room for German and Italian. But he is prepared to admit, three months into his new job, that he does not have all the answers yet. "We need to keep working on clarifying and developing the image."

No red letters

FOR a moment it looked as if Sir Michael Bishop, chairman of British Midland and outgoing chairman of Channel 4, might be heading for a *rapprochement* with new Labour. The Government made it clear that a second five-year term at Channel 4 was not going to happen. Sir Michael lined up with opponents of new Labour in round-robins to the newspapers before the election, and the John Major campaign bus was in fact a British Midland jet. Normal commercial rates were paid of course, but it left his foot firmly planted in the Tory camp.

So Bishop was rather pleased to be approached by headhunters looking for a new chairman of the Post Office. They kindly explained that Sir Michael's unfortunate political beliefs would not be a problem. Though greatly flattered, Sir Michael has had to decide that with the fast-expanding British Midland's first Airbuses on the way, he could not really also run the Post Office, complete with possible privatisations. Alas, we will now never know whether Tony Blair really is flexible enough to give a top job to such an implacable opponent.

● *XAAR? An arresting name. "I am Princess Xaar, of the planet Tharg," perhaps? No, it is the latest computer company to come to the stock market. Braced for an incomprehensible stream of computerese, I inquire cautiously where the name comes from. It was chosen, says Graham Wylie, chief executive but no relation to the Graham Wylie from computer group Sage, alas, because that combination of letters is easily pronounceable by the Japanese. Plus, "Americans seem to think anything with an X in it is high-tech." Beware silly company names, though; remember what happened to Toad.*

THE TIMES CITY DIARY

Spokes-man

RICHARD FARRANT'S appointment as chief operating officer for the new City mega-regulator whose name I dare not speak means he will definitely be off to Canary Wharf with the rest. Farrant, who was chief executive of the Securities and Futures Authority, is a high-flyer who was never going to accept a subordinate position with the new body. He will, if anything, be even leaner and fitter once he is installed down river.

Farrant lives near Maidenhead and arrives at Paddington every morning clutching a fold-up bicycle which he rides all the way to the SFA on the south bank of the Thames. (He sometimes beats a colleague who makes the same journey by Tube.) Canary Wharf will add a couple more miles to his journey — providing he can work out the route. I am told he tried a test run the other day and got lost.

● *AS BRENT WALKER sinks into the west, I bring you the wit and wisdom of George Walker, now planning to float his Russian satellite racing service in 18 months — but not in London, it seems, where it might not be properly appreciated. Asked for his most admired contemporaries, he said: "I had a great respect for Jimmy Goldsmith and a tremendous regard for Tiny Rowland — honourable, straightforward, super guys."*

What's up, Doc?

ERLING REFSUM, the City's biggest fan of the biotechnology sector, has abandoned Yamaichi to rejoin Nomura, where he wil be allowed to get his hands dirty with floating new companies, private placings and so on. The former surgeon was introduced to the City by Arnab Banerji, now running Foreign & Colonial Emerging Markets. It has been a bad year for biotech — and for some of Dr Refsum's tips in his "New beasts in the jungle" review of the sector. But he was the first to spot Shield Diagnostics. He started tipping them at around 50p — they are now at 732½p.

MARTIN WALLER

STOCK MARKET FRASER NELSON

Northern Rock climbs on GUS takeover talk

AFTER less than two weeks in the market, **Northern Rock** found itself at the centre of takeover speculation yesterday after a string of dealing room rumours helped its shares to break through the 500p level.

Its strength in mortgage lending prompted traders to suggest that **Great Universal Stores**, up 5½p at 709p, was planning to augment its substantial car loan division by making a paper bid for the former building society.

Lord Wolfson of Sunningdale, GUS chairman, categorically denied that the company has any intention of buying Northern Rock, although his company made no official statement.

Northern Rock ended the day 16½p stronger at 498p, lifting the value of windfalls held by its remaining 450,000 shareholders by 3.4 per cent.

A steady flow of takeover speculation lightened up an otherwise quiet trading day, giving leverage to the swathe of rumours that traditionally merge after Friday lunchtimes in the City.

As always, **WH Smith** was seen as a favourite target, with the shares 5p better at 390p. John Hancock, head of its American division, had to deny morning speculation that he was personally planning a £100 million management buyout and had already on support of venture capitalists.

The rumours reinforced suspicion that the takeover approach by Tim Waterstone, set together last month, had served to test the water for other would-be predators.

Lloyds TSB ended the day 4p dearer at 791p after its staff were said to be talking out making a sizeable overseas acquisition.

Abbey National was the second best performer on the FTSE 100, gaining 34p to 1112p after James Capel issued a buy note. The bank has had to escape speculation that it is included on the acquisition list drawn up by a number of larger rivals.

LucasVarity pipped Abbey for highest climber in the FTSE 100, gaining 8½p to 229½p on further approval of Ed Wallis, chairman of PowerGen, as its new chairman.

Redland, the building supplies company, found its shares 17½p dearer at 257½p after talk that either a management shake-up or a takeover bid are imminent. The position of Robert Napier, its embattled chief executive, was said to be in question.

John Leach, left, of Brent Walker, and John Llewellyn-Lloyd, chief executive of Close Brothers, after William Hill sale

The strong recovery of **Logica** shares cooled slightly, as they softened 2½p to 927½p. However, rumours that the computer services firm is close to completing a £4 million acquisition gained strength, with many dealers expecting the company to make a formal announcement early next week.

VideoLogic gained 9 per cent to 60½p, on speculation that it will be announcing a substantial deal to supply its television equipment with its interim results next month.

British Land shares were the poorest FTSE 100 performers after falling 21½p to 686½p when its directors cashed in share options. The shares have jumped by 22 per cent since August. Traders feared John Ritblat, its chairman, was calling the top of the market.

One deal the City's rumour machine missed out on was the 80p a share offer for **Peek**, the electronic equipment producer, which came after the market closed. The company's shares have fallen from 107p to as low as 30p in the past 12 months, and held at 42p yesterday. The US-based Thermo Power Corporation is valuing the company at £98 million in cash.

Remaining shares of the once-mighty **Brent Walker** lost the 0.07p remaining value they had after its board secured the release of William Hill, the last remnant of George Walker's 1980 creation. They are now worth nothing, and stand in the market at 0p, but must remain listed until a formal clearance is arranged at the end of this month, after which the company will be liquidated.

Shares of **Vocalis** leapt from their low of 57½p to 69½p as the speech recognition firm announced a £3 million deal to supply its technology to Ericsson.

Britton held firm at 176½p as Caraustar, its potential suitor, stayed quiet over the prospect of a formal bid. Its approach has jolted Britton shares, tipped in last Saturday's *Tempus* column in *The Times* to become the strongest performers of any UK equity this week.

Jardine International finally agreed a £53.3 million offer for **Appleyard**, the car dealer, whose shares jumped 12½p to 78½. Expectations of more consolidation in the sector helped **Dagenham Motors** 1p ahead to 113½p and **Evans Halshaw** 6½p better at 277½p.

IMI, which bought a major valve company two days ago, continued to race further away from its 285p low in July on further reflection on the deal.

Nottingham Forest failed to impress at its debut on the Alternative Investment Market, opening at a 10p discount to its offer price of 70p. Traders at Winterflood Securities were unsurprised by the flop, saying that football stocks had fallen out of favour.

Shares in **Ramco Energy**, the oil exploration company, bottomed out after an independent revaluation of the firm wiped some £64 million from its market value in the past two weeks. They have fallen from £11 and yesterday firmed by 15p to 850p.

☐ **GILT-EDGED:** Higher than expected factory gate prices from the US provided the only relief from an otherwise quiet day in the futures pit. The data did nothing to challenge the widely held view that UK interest rates will rise by a quarter-point next month.

Treasury 8 per cent 2000 eased £1/16, closing at £103. Treasury 8 per cent 2015 moved up £1/16 to £115¾.

☐ **NEW YORK:** Blue chips were weaker but off early lows as the market calmed down after a sharp sell-off sparked by a surprisingly big rise in September US wholesale prices. By midday the Dow Jones industrial average was down 18.91 points at 8,042.51.

One of the stock market's longest suspensions may be coming towards an end after Costain yesterday finally managed to publish details of a long-awaited rescue package. The shares were suspended last November at 45p — any bid that emerges from new shareholder Skanska would have to be at least 50p.

MOVERS OF THE WEEK

	Current price	Week's change	
Britton	117½p	+39p	Takeover approach
Capital Radio	534p	+58p	Chris Evans signs for Virgin
Alexandra Workwear	127½p	+18½p	Profits recovery under way
Airtours	£11.45	+50p	Hopes on vertical integration
Barclays	£16.25	-72½p	Decision to sell BZW
Appleyard Group	78½p	+12½p	Takeover agreed
British Telecom	444½p	-25p	Doubts over MCI merger
British Biotech	120p	-14p	Jitters in biotech sector
Cortecs International	175½p	-17p	Uncertainty among biotechs

MAJOR INDICES

New York (midday):

Dow Jones	8042.51 (-18.91)
S&P Composite	967.94 (-2.66)

Tokyo:

Nikkei Average	Closed

Hong Kong:

Hang Seng	Closed

Amsterdam:

EOE Index	907.79 (-8.35)

Sydney:

AO	2694.5 (-27.7)

Frankfurt:

DAX	4188.52 (+54.49)

Singapore:

Straits	1901.24 (+39.78)

Brussels:

General	13765.42 (-130.95)

Paris:

CAC-40	2955.11 (-5.54)

Zurich:

SKA Gen	1217.80 (-2.80)

London:

FT 30	3366.7 (+7.0)
FTSE 100	5227.3 (+9.5)
FTSE 250	4874.3 (+9.7)
FTSE 350	2514.1 (+4.7)
FTSE Eurotrack 100	2682.57 (+25.80)
FTSE All-Share	2455.93 (+4.44)
FTSE Non Financials	2463.22 (+2.60)
FTSE Fixed Interest	132.42 (-0.25)
FTSE Govt Secs	100.0 (-0.13)
Bargains	46171
SEAQ Volume	698.8m
US$	1.6205 (-0.0063)
German Mark	2.8365 (-0.0075)
Exchange Index	100.1 (-0.1)
Bank of England official close (4pm)	
£:ECU	1.4415
£:SDR	1.1343
RPI	159.3 Sep (3.6%) Jan 1987=100
RPIX	157.8 Sep (2.7%) Jan 1987=100

RECENT ISSUES

Aggreko	174	+	3
Buckland Inv Wrts	10		...
Buckland Invstmnts	17½		...
Cairngorm Demtl IT	94½		...
Cairngrm Demtl Wrt	17½	+	1
Cambury Inv Wrts	¼		...
Cambury Invesments	2½		...
Computerland UK	140½		...
Creative Publishing	158½		...
I S Solutions	147½		...
Latchways (155)	174½		...
NSB Retail Sys	152½		...
Northern Rock	498	+	16½
Nottnghm Frst (70)	61		...
SHL Group	266½	-	1

RIGHTS ISSUES

Consld Coal n/p (5)	1¼	...
Premier Asset n/p (13)	1¼	...

MAJOR CHANGES

RISES:

Assoc Br Ports	301p (+14p)
Biocomps Intl	515p (+22½p)
Abbey Natl	954½p (+34p)
Northern Rock	468p (+16½p)
JJB Sports	500p (+15p)
MMT Comp	560p (+13½p)
Smiths Inds	956½p (+22p)
IMI	439½p (+10p)
Meyer Int	432p (+9½p)
GRE	325p (+7p)
Stand Chart	834p (+17p)
Halifax	742p (+14½p)
Alliance & Leic	720½p (+14p)
Premier Farnell	551p (+10½p)
Ramco Egy	850p (+15p)

FALLS:

Racal Elect	228½p (-25p)
Shield Diag	732½p (-25p)
Caird Gp	800p (-22½p)
Scotia	400p (-10p)
Reuters	748p (-14½p)
Colt Telecom	576½p (-10p)
Boosey Hwks	725p (-12½p)
Next	731p (-12½p)
Waste Mgt Intl	252p (-9p)

Closing Prices Page 26

TEMPUS

Power of gold

BRIAN GILBERTSON is clearly a man with a mission and that mission seems to be the transformation of South Africa's antique mining industry into a modern business. The deal struck yesterday with Gold Fields will have the important effect of creating a South African gold powerhouse: a company generating 4 million ounces, similar in size to Newmont and Barrick. More important, it will be run by its own management and will have the opportunity to cut costs dramatically in this lacklustre industry.

When Gilbertson demerged the Billiton non-precious metals arm of Gencor via a London stock exchange flotation, mining analysts complained that the remaining Gencor was left as a rump, a captive South African investment, exposed to the depreciating Rand and an equally depreciating gold price. Billiton acquired access to foreign capital markets but lacked the glitter of precious metals.

Recently, however, expectations of the aluminium price have soared and the gold price has fallen to $325 per ounce. Many of Gencor's mines are probably operating at a cash cost well above the price of the metal.

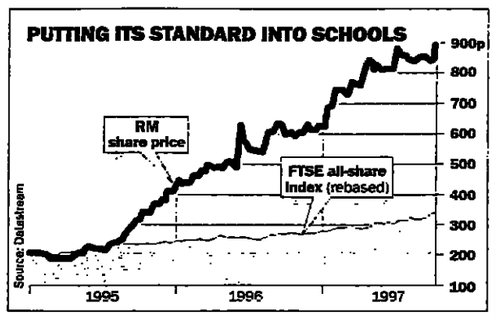
The logic to combine Gencor's proactive management with the profitable assets of Gold Fields including the Driefontein mine, which could have a cash cost of near $200 per ounce. South Africa's mining industry is highly labour intensive, a weakness which was acceptable when wage rates were low and the weak rand and a high gold price flattered margins. The presence of Nail, the Black South African empowerment company, could be critical to a reduction in manning levels and a surge in profitability.

RM

WHEN you supply half of the primary schools and a third of the secondaries in the country with computer equipment, you are in an enviable position. Not least when the Government has earmarked another £1 billion of capital investment in the nation's classrooms.

Launched on the stock market at 175p in December 1994, RM has been a spectacular investment and the recent fuss over the Prime Minister's discussions with Bill Gates of Microsoft and plans to bring the Internet into every school have sent RM's share price bubbling up to yesterday's close of 900p. Currently less than 1 per cent of the schools' budget is spent on IT, enough to generate annual sales in excess of £100 million for RM. If just 5 per cent of the new money trickled into RM, it would have a dramatic effect on its profits.

The question is why RM has such leverage in the classroom and the reason appears to be that, instead of trying to sell overpowered and oversophisticated equipment at schools, it redesigns existing software into simple packages that can used as teaching aids for reading and arithmetic. RM's position looks secure but the shares are discounting aggressive forecasts of future profit. Currently, RM is valued at some 28 times earnings. That could fall to just 23 times next year but any delay in public spending could be a bit of a blow for the share price.



Appleyard

WHY does Jardine want to plough £53 million into an industry where all the major players are getting cold feet? The only logical reason for any company to consider expanding its interests in car dealership chains would be to cash in on the current boom in car sales. But to do so, especially through Appleyard, is perhaps foolish.

Appleyard is a classic motor retail business in that it has several unco-ordinated layers of management, painfully low margins, and is making a thumping £5.1 million loss. It has also made a series of unwise acquisitons and is still recovering from an embarrassing fraud case.

Because of these factors, Appleyard has found it impossible to meet the current high demands of car manufacturers, causing it to lose valuable franchises. Jardine undoubtedly has the expertise and resources in the motor retail industry to tackle Appleyard's problems over the next couple of years. But by the time the ranks of management have been carefully weeded and more franchises have been won, will car sales still be buoyant?

The geezer in the flat cap trying to sell you a second hand Ford Escort would undoubedly say yes. Wiser sources may suggest that 80p per share is only cheap when everyone wants to buy a new car.

Costain

FOR a minor construction group with £300 million of turnover, Costain has attracted a lot of investment interest. Malaysian, Kuwaiti, Saudi and now Swedish giants of the building trade have all dabbled in Costain but to little gain, subscribing for shares in rescue cash calls which have only led to more pain.

Yesterday's open offer should leave Costain debt-free but with a boardroom that looks a bit like the General Assembly of the United Nations. It can only be hoped that Costain board meetings are less acrimonious and more constructive.

Skanska is making a small investment, some £8 million, to help Costain back into health but the Swedes are getting options which can be exercised at the open offer price during the next three years and which will give Skanska 40 per cent of the company. That will trigger a bid.

Why should Skanska wait? The company could bid today but the probably reason is that none of the other shareholders will agree to sell at this price, leaving the question as to who will really be in control in the boardroom.

Ordinary shareholders will diluted to almost nil and are unlikely to want to buy more.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISHED

BRITISH FUNDS

1997 High	Low	Stock	Price £	+/-	Int yld %	Grs red yld
		RTS (under 5 years)				
[illegible]	100⅝	Exch 15% 1997	100⅝	- ⅛	14.98	6.65
[illegible]	113⅝	Treas 4¾% 1998	113⅝		4.00	6.75
[illegible]	100⅞	Exch 9¾% 1998	100⅞	..	9.69	7.07
[illegible]	100⅞	Treas 7¼% 1998	100⅞	- ½	7.24	7.09
[illegible]	104	Treas 14% 1998-01	104	- ½	13.48	7.04
[illegible]	107¼	Treas 15¾% 1998	107¼	- ⅛	14.38	7.10
[illegible]	105	Exch 12% 1998	105	- ½	11.43	7.15
[illegible]	102⅝	Treas 8¾% 1999	102⅝	- ½	8.25	7.15
[illegible]	106⅝	Exch 12¼% 1999	106⅝	- ½	11.45	7.15
[illegible]	105⅞	Treas 10¾% 1999	105⅞	- ⅛	10.00	7.10
[illegible]	98⅝	Treas 6% 1999	98⅝	..	6.10	7.01
[illegible]	105⅛	Conv 10¼% 1999	105⅛	- ½	9.68	7.10
[illegible]	104⅞	Conv 9% 2000	104⅞	- ⅛	8.64	7.06
[illegible]	102⅞	Treas 8% 2000	103	- ⅛	7.77	6.92
[illegible]	102⅝	Treas 8¾% 2000	102⅝	- ½	8.26	7.10
[illegible]	114⅝	Treas 13% 2000	114⅝	- ½	11.34	7.02
[illegible]	105⅝	Treas 10% 2001	105⅝	- ⅛	9.18	6.95
[illegible]	98½	Treas 7% 2001	100⅛	- ⅛	6.95	6.92
		GILTS (5 to 15 years)				
[illegible]	97½	Treas 7% 2002	101⅛	- ⅛	6.91	6.88
[illegible]	109½	Treas 9¾% 2002	112⅝	- ½	8.69	6.78
[illegible]	102½	Treas 8% 2003	105⅝	- ½	7.53	6.66
[illegible]	111½	Treas 10% 2003	115⅝	- ⅛	8.64	6.71
[illegible]	113⅞	Treas 11¼% 2001-04	113⅞	- ⅛	10.11	6.84
[illegible]	87½	Fund 3½% 1999-04	88⅞	- ⅛	3.93	5.46
[illegible]	109⅞	Conv 9¾% 2004	116	- ⅛	8.19	6.80
[illegible]	94⅛	Treas 8¾% 2004	102⅝	- ⅛	8.68	6.57
[illegible]	104⅝	Treas 8¾% 2005	111⅝	- ⅛	7.59	6.58
[illegible]	110⅝	Conv 9¾% 2005	115⅛	- ½	8.14	6.59
[illegible]	124⅝	Treas 12¼% 2003-05	126⅝	- ½	9.72	6.70
[illegible]	98⅞	Treas 7¼% 2006	106⅝	- ½	7.04	6.54
[illegible]	89½	Treas 7¾% 2006	107⅝	- ½	7.19	6.59
[illegible]	108⅝	Treas 8% 2002-06	104⅞	- ⅛	7.64	6.86
[illegible]	129⅝	Treas 11¾% 2003-07	121⅝	- ½	9.65	6.75
[illegible]	116⅞	Treas 8¾% 2007	113⅞	- ½	7.48	6.58
[illegible]	107⅞	Treas 7¾% 2007	105⅝	- ⅛	6.87	6.50
[illegible]	121⅝	Treas 9% 2008	119 ↑	- ½	7.56	6.55
[illegible]	114⅝	Treas 8% 2009	111½	- ⅛	7.15	6.55
[illegible]	99⅝	Treas 5¾% 2010	97⅞	- ⅛	6.43	6.56
[illegible]	124⅝	Treas 9% 2011	121⅞	- ⅛	7.39	6.57
[illegible]	125½	Treas 9% 2012	122⅝ef	- ⅛	7.33	6.57
[illegible]	93⅝	Treas 5¼% 2008-12	91⅛	+ ½	6.01	6.42
[illegible]	112⅝	Treas 7¾% 2012-15	110½	..	7.01	6.52
		LONGS (over 15 years)				
[illegible]	116⅝	Treas 9% 2013	114⅞	..	7.01	6.58
[illegible]	118⅝	Treas 8% 2015	115⅝	+ ⅛	6.91	6.50
[illegible]	126⅝	Treas 9¾% 2017	123⅝	+ ⅛	7.08	6.56
[illegible]	121⅝	Tr 8% 2021	119½	+ ⅛	6.77	6.48
		UNDATED				
[illegible]	54½	War Ln 3½%	53⅝	- ½	6.58	
[illegible]	38½	Treas 2½%	37	- ½	6.76	
[illegible]	58⅝	Consols 4%	58⅝	- ⅛	6.80	
		INDEX-LINKED on projected inflation of:			10%	5%
[illegible]	182⅝	Treas I. 2½% 2001	192⅝	- ½	2.46	3.21
[illegible]	180⅝	Treas I. 2½% 2003	189⅝	- ⅝	2.67	3.21
[illegible]	123⅝	Treas I. 4½% 2004	122⅝	- ⅝	2.73	3.19
[illegible]	260⅝	Treas I. 2% 2006	261⅝	- ½	2.88	3.22
[illegible]	185	Treas I. 2½% 2009	185⅝	- ⅝	2.91	3.19
[illegible]	192⅝	Treas I. 2½% 2011	191	- ½	2.96	3.20
[illegible]	150⅝	Treas I. 2½% 2013	150⅝	- ½	2.99	3.21
[illegible]	171⅝	Treas I. 2½% 2016	170⅝	- ⅝	3.02	3.22
[illegible]	168⅝	Treas I. 2½% 2020	166⅝	- ½	3.08	3.24
[illegible]	139⅝	Treas I. 2½% 2024	137⅝	- ⅝	3.09	3.24
[illegible]	136⅝	Treas I. 4½% 2030	134⅝	- ⅝	3.08	3.23

LIFFE OPTIONS

Series	Calls Oct	Nov	Jan	Puts Oct	Nov	Jan
140	17½	21½	25	—	3	4
160	1	9	13	4	9	11½
950	15½	70½	87½	10½	49½	64½
1000	1	47½	64	45	76½	91½
750	22½	49	65	1½	18	29½
750	1½	24	40	31	44½	54½
460	36½	48	57	—	12½	18½
500	4	24	35	7½	32	37
550	38	55	69	—	13	17½
600	3	26	40	14½	32½	37½
500	48½	73½	77½	—	16	29½
550	11	44	50½	11	36	53½
1600	27½	135½	160½	15½	84½	104
1700	3	89½	113	79½	138	157
800	36	61½	76½	1	27	35½
850	4	34	50½	19	51½	60
900	18	56	73½	5½	35	44½
950	1	33	65	39	59	71
600	32	58½	74	1½	20½	25
650	4½	32½	47½	22	43½	48
900	22	61	81½	5½	34½	46
950	7½	37½	56½	34½	61½	71½
180	3	10½	16½	2	8	10
200	—	3½	9	19½	23½	26½
550	19½	47½	64	5½	27	33½
600	2	26	41	35½	53½	60
800	16	64½	82	9½	44	50½
850	1	42½	59	44½	72	80
1250	26	98	125½	13½	65	82½
1400	6½	72½	99½	43½	89½	107
2000	67	179	227½	10½	97	135½
2100	14½	128½	178	57	148½	184
700	42	69½	77	—	13½	22
750	4½	39½	47½	14	33½	43½
950	3½	52½	97½	1½	26½	46
1000	7	55	70	28	51	68½
1050	42½	72½	93	1	21½	29½
1050	7	43½	64	15½	42	50½
600	37	56	70½	—	14	21
650	3	23½	42½	18	35½	41
500	42	57½	71½	—	17½	23
550	4	29½	43½	14½	38	44
500	36½	54	101	3	37½	47½
550	7	57½	75½	23½	61½	78
700	50	51½	92	1	22	33½
750	10	52½	83	13	42½	55½
600	11	42½	59½	7½	31½	45½
150	—	21	36½	46½	60½	74
360	22½	38½	44	—	11½	13½
330	1½	18½	28	9½	24	27
450	7½	26½	37½	5	20½	26
500	—	12½	23	38	48½	49½
450	17½	33	—	3½	15	—
500	5	22	28	35	41	50½
575	25	58	67	2½	22½	33
600	9½	43	54	19	34	44½
800	30	65	82	3½	36½	52½
850	10	57	72	24	60	73
850	20½	55	69½	5	32	41½
(*854½)	900	2	31½	46½	36½	58
Vodafone	330	10	28	37½	2½	17
(*337½)	360	½	15	24	22½	33½
Woolwich	300	17½	30	36½	—	7½
(*317)	330	½	13½	21	13½	21½
Zeneca	2100	23½	128	166½	26½	94½
(*2100)	2200	2	80	122	100½	150½
	Series	Calls Nov	Feb	May	Puts Nov	Feb	May
BTR	240	11½	21	24½	10	17	22
(*240½)	260	4	12½	16	22	27	34
Blue Circ	360	31½	43½	49½	5½	12	18
(*385½)	390	12	25½	32	17½	24½	32
Br Aero	1600	117½	165½	194½	18½	38½	53
(*1692½)	1700	52½	104½	135½	51	78	94
Br Telcom	425	26½	39½	—	8½	22½	—
(*441)	465	10	22	—	30½	43½	—
Cadbury	600	30	46	58½	11	21½	32
(*613½)	650	8½	25½	35	40½	48½	58½
Energy Gp	600	52	59	64½	¼	7½	5
(*647½)	650	11½	24½	32½	11½	19½	20½
Gallaher	280	21½	30½	35	5	9½	15
(*295)	300	10½	19	24	13½	18	24½
GEC	390	19	30	42½	10	19½	22½
(*397½)	420	6½	16½	26	27	35½	38½
Grnd Met	550	41	56½	69½	7	19	25½
(*581)	600	13½	30	44	29½	44	50
Guinness	550	37	55	62½	8½	17	22½
(*576½)	600	10½	30½	37	38	41	47
Hanson	260	24	33½	38	3	7½	13
(*299)	300	11	21½	27½	10	15½	21½
Imp Tob	350	19½	25	31	6	17	22
(*371)	390	5½	11	17½	22½	26	40
Kingfshr	800	50½	79½	90	15	30½	39½
(*832)	850	23½	52	62½	35½	51	62
Lasmo	260	22	32	37	4	9½	13½
(*276½)	280	10	20½	26½	11½	17½	22½
Ladbroke	260	21½	31	38½	6	11	14½
(*293)	300	11	21	26	15	21	24
Lucas Var	220	15	22	27½	4½	10	12½
(*229)	240	8	12½	18	14½	21	23
P&O	700	87½	97½	62½	14	21½	21½
(*721½)	750	12	31	36	39½	46½	56½
Prudential	650	38	62	73½	14½	27½	40
(*668½)	700	12½	38	49	40	53½	65½
Rio Tinto	950	45	75½	88	15	35½	43½
(*975½)	1000	19	48	61½	37½	59	68
Redland	240	20½	30	36	4	10	16

FTSE INDEX (*5289½)

Strike	Calls Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Puts Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan
5100	171	266	316½	365	406	15	82½	106½
5150	129½	226	280	314	—	24	96	123
5200	93½	192½	249½	264½	435	38½	114½	144
5250	63½	163	218½	255½	—	60	136½	167
5300	39	135	187½	225	373½	90	159½	189
5350	21½	112½	160½	200	—	130½	188½	216
5400	10½	91½	138	179	324	178½	219	244½

October 10 Total: 3178 Calls: 1291 Puts: 1887

*underlying security price

LONDON FINANCIAL FUTURES

	Period	Open	High	Low	Sett	Vol
Long Gilt Previous open interest 196720	Dec 97	119.01	119.11	118.19	118.28	86909
	Mar 98	118.29	118.29	118.26	118.26	300
German Govt Bond (Bund) Previous open interest 324610	Dec 97	102.61	102.69	102.10	102.25	276049
	Mar 98	101.50	101.70	101.43	101.52	3501
Italian Govt Bond (BTP) Previous open interest 125561	Dec 97	111.20	111.49	110.40	110.90	110370
	Mar 98	110.60	110.60	110.60	110.85	70
Japanese Govt Bond (JGB)	Dec 97	128.75	128.75	128.56	128.62	587
	Mar 98	127.79	127.79	127.74	127.7310	
Three Mth Sterling	Dec 97	92.54	92.56	92.54	92.54	10486
	Mar 98	92.50	92.52	92.48	92.49	11688
Previous open interest 621475	Jun 98	92.50	92.53	92.49	92.50	13426
Three Mth Euromark Previous open interest 1692420	Dec 97	96.23	96.23	96.14	96.21	120218
	Mar 98	95.94	95.95	95.83	95.91	107293
Three Mth Eurolira Previous open interest 457399	Dec 97	93.60	93.70	93.51	93.60	37757
	Mar 98	94.43	94.45	94.19	94.32	44404
Three Mth Euroyen	Mar 98				99.38	0
	Jun 98				99.28	0
Three Mth Euroswiss Previous open interest 168449	Dec 97	97.91	97.97	97.88	97.93	26723
	Mar 98	97.73	97.76	97.66	97.72	17966
Three Mth ECU Previous open interest 36183	Dec 97	95.30	95.38	95.29	95.34	3020
	Mar 98	95.26	95.32	95.24	95.26	1303
FTSE 100 Previous open interest 74638	Dec 97	5284.0	5315.0	5210.0	5306.0	11015
	Mar 98				5354.0	0

MONEY RATES (%)

Base Rates: Clearing Banks 7 Finance Hse 7½
Discount Market Loans: O/night high: 7 Low 6½ Week fixed: 7
Treasury Bills (Dis): Buy: 2 mth 6⅛; 3 mth 6¼. Sell: 2 mth 6⅞; 3 mth: 6⅝.

	1 mth	2 mth	3 mth	6 mth	12 mth
Prime Bank Bills (Dis):	7⅛-6⅞	7⅛-7	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	
Sterling Money Rates:	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛
Interbank:	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛
Overnight: open 7, close 6¼.					
Local Authority Deps:	7⅛	n/a	7⅛	7⅛	7⅛
Sterling CDs:	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛
Dollar CDs:	5.54	n/a	5.67	5.77	5.94
Building Society CDs:	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛	7⅛-7⅛

TREASURY BILLS: Applied: £57bn allotted: £100m: Bids: £98.265% received: 40%: Last week: £98.265% received: 30%: Avge rate: £6.9490% last wk £6.9450%: Next week: £100m.

EUROPEAN MONEY DEPOSITS (%)

Currency	7 day	1 mth	3 mth	6 mth	Call
Dollar:	5⅞-5⅞	5⅞-5⅞	5⅞-5½	5⅞-5⅝	5¼-4¾
Deutschemark:	3⅛-3¼	3⅛-3¼	3⅛-3⅛	3⅛-3⅛	3½-2½
French Franc	3⅛-3¼	3⅛-3⅛	3⅛-3⅛	3⅛-3⅛	3⅛-2⅞
Swiss Franc	1⅛-1⅛	1⅛-1½	1⅛-1⅛	1⅛-⅞	1⅛-⅞
Yen	½-¼	½-⅜	½-⅜	½-⅜	1-par

GOLD/PRECIOUS METALS (Baird & Co)

Bullion: Open $327.40-328.30 Close: $328.90-329.40 High: $329.10-329.60
Low $327.20-327.70 AM: $327.90 PM: $328.90

Krugerrand: $328.00-330.00 (£202.00-204.00)

Platinum: $

هكذا من الإصل

NEWS

Libraries to put granny on the Net

Every public library in Britain should provide access to the Internet, according to the ground-breaking report which recommends a vast upgrade of lending libraries.

Tony Blair has asked Chris Smith, the Heritage Secretary, to draw up proposals by the end of the year based on a study by the Library and Information Commission ..... Page 1

Judge acquits officers of rape

Six young Army officers accused of gang-raping a student were acquitted on the orders of a judge but their reputations and careers are in tatters. Judge Julian Hall halted the trial after ten days, deciding that the woman's account of her alleged ordeal was riddled with "inconsistencies" ..... Pages 1, 3

Defiant Clinton

President Clinton, criticised by the new Nobel peace laureate for failing to sign up to a global ban on landmines, refused to alter America's policy ..... Page 1

Hague EMU apology

William Hague gave an unreserved apology for the mistake of entering the European exchange-rate mechanism ..... Pages 1, 12-14

New gay right

Foreign nationals in homosexual relationships with British citizens have been given the right to settle in the United Kingdom ..... Page 2

Son held gun

A farm worker who held a shotgun to his crippled mother's head while she pulled the trigger walked free from court ..... Page 7

Haughey sells up

Charles Haughey, the disgraced former Irish Prime Minister, is selling his island to pay tax and legal bills ..... Page 8

Dazzling Queen

The Queen dazzled Pakistan this week with her jewels, some of which she rarely wears ..... Page 9

Nightclub crisis

Manchester's clubland, once the capital of Britain's youth culture, launched a fightback against violence that reached a bloody climax with two murders ..... Page 10

Evangelist row

Bill McCartney, head of the fastest-growing evangelical movement in America, was at the centre of controversy over his past as a football coach ..... Page 15

Flying high

Half a century after making supersonic history in a lethal rocket plane, General Chuck Yeager is at it again ..... Page 16

Hussein anger

King Hussein has ordered the expulsion of the entire intelligence mission from the Israeli Embassy in Amman ..... Page 17

England's players can lose and win

The underdogs of Latvia could today guarantee England's footballers a World Cup bonus of £200,000 each. Under the byzantine play-off system, if Latvia defeat Scotland, England would qualify for the World Cup finals even if they lose in Rome. The players will then be in line for hefty bonuses ..... Pages 1, 5

SIMON KWONG / Reuters

Taiwanese military policemen ride past a review stand to celebrate the 86th National Day of the Nationalist Government

NEWS FEATURES

Valerie Grove: The model of a modern Queen of Jordan can boast a woman whose success in a royal role might have been a blueprint for another Princess ..... Page 21

Under suspicion: If you wear a baseball cap, drive an old banger or walk down the wrong street in one of Bristol's affluent suburbs, you might as put on a jumper marked "burglar" ..... Page 19

British films: When *Wilde*, starring Stephen Fry as Oscar, opens it will become the most heavily subsidised British film ever released Page 20

OPINION

Change and the Tories: The Tory party's most necessary transformation is the need to come to terms with the social and cultural changes that their own economic reforms unleashed ..... Page 23

Blood on the parquet: One reason that it took so long for the political and financial scandals of the Mitterrand years to emerge is France's strong culture of respect for the State ..... Page 23

LETTERS

Lords Tebbit and Habgood on society ..... Page 23

COLUMNS

John Lloyd: I have watched at close quarters the struggle for a certain kind of Europe that has been unfolding in Rome: one which seeks a decisive break with the Italian postwar tradition of corporatist accommodation ..... Page 22

Magnus Linklater: Chairing the Arts Council of England is hugely demanding, not just in time but in sheer concentration of effort ..... Page 22

OBITUARIES

J. G. Links, Venice and Canaletto scholar; **Michael Cummings**, cartoonist ..... Page 25

BUSINESS

Costain cash call: The troubled construction group whose shares were suspended a year ago, proposed a financial rescue that could yield control to Skanska, the Swedish company ..... Page 27

Gold deal: South African mining giants Gencor and Goldfields have merged to form the world's largest gold producer, to be known as GoldCo ..... Page 27

Markets: The FTSE 100 rose 9.5 to 5,227.3. The pound fell 100.2 to 100.1, falling .63 cents to $1.6205 but rising .75 pfennigs to DM2.8365 ..... Page 30

SPORT

Football: The fitness of David Beckham and Gareth Southgate caused England most concern during preparations for the World Cup qualifying tie ..... Pages 33-36

Rugby: Jeremy Guscott reflects on his frustrating start to the season Page 41

Motor racing: The unique skills of Michael Schumacher make him the true world champion ..... Page 40

Tennis: Rusedski and Henman will meet in the semi-final of the CA Trophy in Vienna ..... Page 38

SECTIONS

MAGAZINE

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Poetry: Murray Lachlan Young ..... Pages 48, 49
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WEEKEND

Diana memorial: Restoring her garden ..... Page 1
Women and affairs Page 2
Shopping ..... Pages 4, 5
Faith ..... Page 16

The very best of food in Britain

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10 15

For younger readers of *The Times*

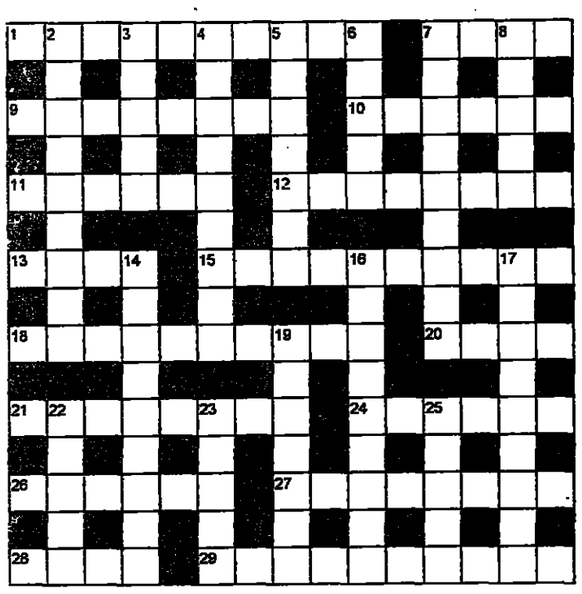
THE TIMES CROSSWORD NO 20,608

A £20 book token will be awarded to the senders of the first five correct solutions opened next Thursday. Entries should be addressed to: The Times, Saturday Crossword Competition, PO Box 486, Virginia Street, London E1 9DD. The names of the winners and the solution will be published next Saturday.

Name/Address .....

.....

.....



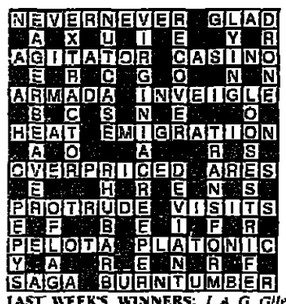
ACROSS

1 Heroine, desolate, having difficulty on Exmoor at first (5,5).
7 Egyptian in need of firm physical exercise (4).
9 Discharge dunderhead from the Blues (8).
10 Drift one mile to harbour (6).
11 Contrive to edge into church after start of service (6).
12 Playing member of The Drones' club? (8).
13 Quote a lot verbally (4).
15 Ritual braves once organised (10).
18 Numbers lacking an initiation in the principles of art (10).
20 Messenger dropping off nothing — it's a sin (4).
21 Doctor put girls on dark treacle (8).
24 Identifies sources of records (6).
26 One doing badly as a blue (6).
27 Arrogant cur I caught pinching rug (8).
28 Announced top dog (4).
29 Arrives before anyone else for Scottish celebration (5-5).

DOWN

2 Fair goal (9).
3 Picnic here, grabbing such a comfortable place (5).
4 Return to base by car and push right in (5,4).
5 Collected works vehicle (7).
6 Watching hunting without initial publicity (5).
7 Skipper with large vessel that's outside entrance (9).
8 Indian detailed to analyse sentences (5).
14 Extension for drawers (5,4).
16 It is hardly brilliant to cheat over crossword answer (9).
17 Urbane tip to get money annually for royalties (5,4).
19 Fashionable drink, it's said, for one in the know (7).
22 University at one time without a lightweight (5).
23 Scorn food (5).
25 Villain's excellent! (5).

Solution to Puzzle No 20,602



Solution to Puzzle No 20,607

LAST WEEK'S WINNERS: *J A G Giles, South Woodford, London; R J Hunt, Warlingham, Surrey; M Kennedy, Seaford, Sussex; G & M Mortimer, New Milton, Hampshire; V Lawrence, Burton on Trent.*

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HOURS OF DARKNESS

TODAY

Sun rises: 7.18 am — Sun sets: 6.16 pm
Moon sets 12.54 am — Moon rises 3.59 pm
Full moon October 16

London 6.16 pm to 7.19 am
Bristol 6.26 pm to 7.23 am
Edinburgh 6.22 pm to 7.38 am
Manchester 6.22 pm to 7.30 am
Penzance 6.39 pm to 7.39 am

TOMORROW

Sun rises: 7.19 am — Sun sets: 6.14 pm
Moon sets 2.08 am — Moon rises 4.34 pm
Full moon October 16

London 6.14 pm to 7.21 am
Bristol 6.24 pm to 7.31 am
Edinburgh 6.20 pm to 7.40 am
Manchester 6.20 pm to 7.32 am
Penzance 6.37 pm to 7.41 am

HIGH TIDES

TODAY	AM	HT	PM	HT
London Bridge	09.04	5.8	22.00	5.9
Aberdeen	09.40	3.6	22.00	3.7
Avonmouth	02.13	10.1	15.06	10.3
Belfast	06.51	3.0	19.13	3.1
Cardiff	01.59	9.4	14.52	9.7
Devonport	00.36	4.5	13.18	4.6
Dover	06.45	5.5	19.33	5.6
Dublin (N Wall)	07.57	3.5	20.11	3.0
Falmouth	00.07	4.3	12.49	4.4
Greenock	09.03	3.0	20.53	3.1
Harwich	07.09	3.4	20.00	3.5
Holyhead	06.27	4.5	18.57	4.8
Hull (Albert D)	01.28	7.1	14.40	7.2
Ilfracombe	01.18	7.0	14.09	7.3
King's Lynn	01.38	5.2	14.45	5.3
Leith	10.40	4.6	22.06	4.7
Liverpool	07.00	7.5	19.33	7.9
Lowestoft	04.59	2.2	18.08	2.3
Margate	07.30	4.0	20.21	4.1
Milford Haven	01.34	5.3	14.34	5.5
Newquay	00.35	5.4	13.25	5.6
Oban	01.30	3.9	14.55	3.3
Penzance	00.03	4.3	12.51	4.0
Portland	02.04	1.4	14.42	1.5
Portsmouth	07.29	4.0	19.55	4.0
Shoreham	06.51	5.0	19.37	5.1
Southampton	06.31	3.9	19.06	4.0
Swansea	01.47	7.4	14.29	7.6
Tees	-	-	12.03	4.4
Walton-on-N	07.09	3.5	20.02	3.6

All times BST. Heights in metres

HIGHEST & LOWEST

Yesterday: Highest day temp: Hove, East Sussex, 19C (66F); lowest day max: Loch Glascarnoch, Highland, 9C (48F); highest rainfall: Lisscombe, Somerset, 1.5in; highest sunshine: Isle of Wight, 9.9hr

NEWSPAPERS SUPPORT RECYCLING

Recycled paper made up 43.6% of the raw material for UK newspapers in the second half of 1996

FORECAST

General: rain in SW England at start of day will quickly sweep E to affect much of England and Wales by evening. Rain will turn heavy in many parts before easing later. Most of N England, Scotland and N Ireland will miss the rain and see sunny periods.

Tonight will be cool everywhere. The rain will linger in south-east for a time and W England and Wales will have a few showers. Rest of UK will be mainly dry with long clear spells.

London, SE England, Cent S England, Channel Isles: dry start, but heavy rain will soon spread from W. Brisk W wind. Max 15-17C (59-63F).

E Anglia, E Midlands, E England: widespread rain before afternoon. Brisk NW wind. Max 15-17C (59-63F).

W Midlands, SW England, Wales: rain for much of day, but becoming more showery by evening. Light, variable wind rising to strong SW. Max 14-16C (57-61F).

NW England, Cent N England: dry at first, but most places will see rain later. Moderate N wind. Max 13-15C (55-59F).

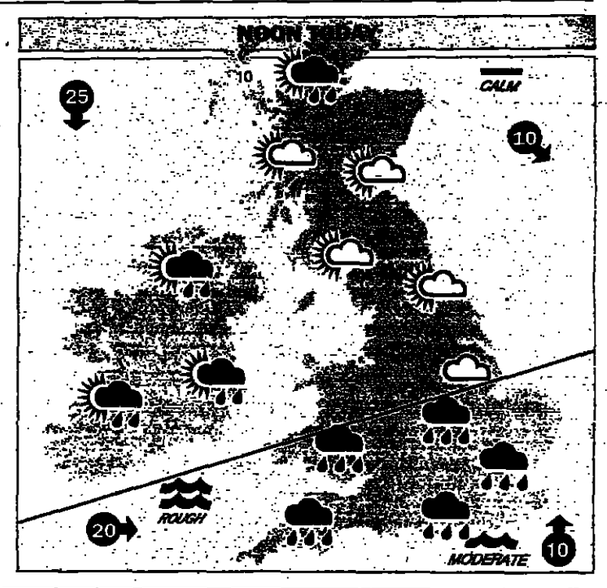
Lake District, IoM, NE England: mainly dry with good sunny spells. Moderate N wind. Max 13-15C (55-59F).

Borders, Edinburgh & Dundee, Aberdeen, SW Scotland, Glasgow, Argyll, N Ireland: cool and breezy. Sunny spells with small risk of showers. Moderate to fresh N wind. Max 11-14C (52-57F).

Republic of Ireland: outbreaks of heavy rain, becoming clearer. Wind *variable, becoming fresh N. Rather* cold. Max 13C (55F).

Cent Highlands, Moray Firth, N Scotland, Orkney, Shetland: cool and windy with sunshine and showers. Strong N wind. Max 10-12C (50-54F).

Outlook: chilly with brisk N wind bringing sunshine and showers.



AROUND BRITAIN YESTERDAY

24 hrs to 5 pm: b=bright; c=cloud; d=drizzle; ds=dust storm; du=dull; f=fair; fg=fog; g=gale; h=hail; r=rain; sh=shower; sl=sleet; sn=snow; su=sun; t=thunder

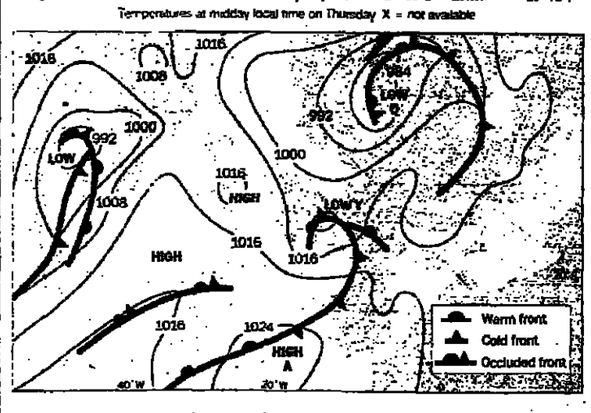
	Sun hrs	Rain in	C	Max F			Sun hrs	Rain in	C	Max F	
Aberdeen	6.8	0.27	14	57	s	Lerwick	5.5	0.11	11	52	sh
Anglesey	2.6	0.03	15	59	sh	Leuchars	7.0	0.50	14	57	s
Aspatria	2.3	0.58	13	55	sh	Littlehmptn	9.3	0.36	17	63	g
Aviemore	3.1	0.10	11	52	sh	London	8.2	0.25	17	63	s
Belfast	x					Lowestoft	7.3	0.18	16	61	sh
Birmingham	8.9	0.06	15	59	s	Manchester	3.8	0.31	14	57	sh
Bognor R	8.8	0.37	18	64	s	Margate	8.5	0.48	17	63	s
Bournem'th	9.6	0.37	18	64	s	Minehead	7.4	0.74	16	61	s
Bristol	8.0	0.33	17	63	s	Morecambe	3.6	0.31	14	57	sh
Buxton	4.6	0.20	11	52	s	Newcastle	6.4	0.33	13	55	sh
Cardiff	8.7	0.35	15	59	s	Newquay	x				
Clacton	7.4	0.11	16	61	b	Norwich	6.8	0.18	15	59	s
Cleethorpes	4.6	0.15	15	59	sh	Oxford	8.9	0.28	17	63	s
Colwyn Bay	4.5	0.10	15	59	sh	Penzance	x	0.21	19	66	s
Cromer	5.8	0.13	15	59	s	Poole	x				
Dunbar	x					Prestatyn	x				
Eastbourne	8.9	0.51	17	63	s	Ross-o-wye	8.2	0.54	16	61	s
Edinburgh	6.0	0.83	14	57	sh	Salcombe	8.9	0.26	16	61	s
Eskdalemuir	3.7	0.83	13	55	sh	Saunton Snd	6.8	0.56	16	61	s
Exmouth	9.0	0.24	17	63	s	Scarboro'	6.6	0.07	13	55	s
Falmouth	8.8	0.35	18	64	s	Shrewsbury	8.0	0.08	15	59	s
Fishguard	5.8	0.09	15	59	b	Skegness	6.7	0.07	15	59	sh
Folkestone	8.4	0.72	17	63	s	Southend	9.0	0.02	18	64	s
Glasgow	x					Southport	x				
Guernsey	8.1	0.31	18	64	s	Southsea	8.0	0.27	18	64	s
Hastings	8.1	0.56	18	64	s	Stornoway	8.0	0.06	12	54	sh
Hayling I.	x	0.28	17	63	s	Swanage	8.8	0.29	18	64	s
Herne Bay	7.9	0.49	17	63	s						
Hove	7.3	0.18	19	66	b	Teignmouth	9.0	0.26	18	64	s
Hunstanton	6.0	-	15	59	s	Tenby	7.7	0.06	16	61	s
Isle-of-man	4.3	0.08	15	59	b	Tiree	6.7	0.14	13	55	sh
Isle-of-wight	9.9	0.41	17	63	s	Torquay	9.0	0.36	18	64	s
Jersey	8.5	0.62	18	64	s	Tynemouth	x				
Kinloss	3.7	0.01	13	55	sh	West-s-mare	9.0	0.59	17	63	s
Leeds	7.9	0.03	14	57	sh	Weymouth	8.3	0.15	17	63	s

ABROAD

Ajaccio	25	77	s	Corfu	26	79	s	Majorca	26	79	s
Akrotiri	30	86	s	C'phagn	14	57	r	Malaga	25	77	s
Alex'dria	26	79	f	Dublin	14	57	f	Malta	23	73	f
Algiers	26	79	f	Dubrovnik	24	75	s	Melb'rne	20	68	s
Amst'dam	18	64	c	Faro	23	73	s	Mexico C	19	66	f
Athens	25	77	s	Florence	23	73	s	Miami	30	86	s
B Aires	23	73	f	Frankfurt	20	68	c	Milan	25	77	f
Bahrain	34	93	s	Funchal	24	75	s	Montreal	23	73	s
Bangkok	35	95	s	Geneva	23	73	c	Moscow	10	50	c
Barbados	30	86	s	Gibraltar	26	79	s	Munich	23	73	f
Barcelona	24	75	s	Helsinki	11	52	c	N Delhi	31	88	s
Beirut	27	81	f	Hong K	26	79	c	N York	24	75	s
Belgrade	27	81	s	Innsbruck	23	73	s	Nairobi	24	75	f
Berlin	21	70	c	Istanbul	23	73	s	Naples	27	81	f
Bermuda	24	75	f	Jeddah	35	95	s	Nice	24	75	s
Biarritz	27	81	s	Jo'burg	12	54	r	Oslo	9	48	c
Barda's	23	73	f	L Angels	23	73	s	Paris	22	72	f
Brussels	19	66	r	L Palmas	25	77	f	Peking	24	75	s
Budapst	24	75	s	Le Touqt	18	64	f	Perth	18	64	r
Cairo	30	86	s	Lisbon	24	75	s	Prague	22	72	f
Cape Tn	23	73	s	Locarno	21	70	x	Reykjavik	6	43	f
Ch'church	14	57	s	Luxembg	18	64	c	Rhodes	24	75	s
Chicago	22	72	s	Luxor	33	91	s	Rio de J	28	82	s
Cologne	21	70	f	Madrid	22	72	s	Riyadh	37	99	s

Rome	25	77	s	Venice	21	70	f	Wash'ton	28	82	s
S Fr'isco	16	61	s	Vienna	20	68	c	Wel'ngton	14	57	s
S Paulo	x			Warsaw	16	61	r	Zurich	23	73	f
Salzburg	22	72	f								
Santiago	17	63	s								
Seoul	19	66	f								
Sing'por	28	82	r								
Stkholm	9	48	c								
Strasb'rg	25	77	c								
Sydney	20	68	f								
Tangier	23	73	s								
Tel Aviv	29	84	s								
Tenerife	26	79	s								
Tokyo	19	66	s								
Toronto	21	70	c								
Tunis	25	77	c								
Valencia	30	86	s								
Vanc'ver	13	55	f								

Temperatures at midday local time on Thursday X = not available



Changes to the chart above from noon: high A will remain slow-moving with little change in pressure, low Q will move east and fill, low Y will run quickly southeast and fill

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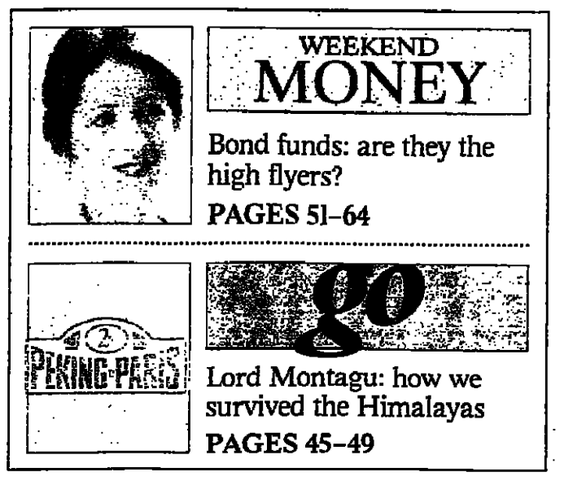

THE TIMES
SATURDAY SPORT

OCTOBER 11 1997

WORLD CUP CAMPAIGN REACHES

England ready to make their point

FROM OLIVER HOLT
OTBALL CORRESPONDENT
IN ROME

NN HODDLE and his Eng- squad left the seclusion of rural retreat yesterday after- and entered the Eternal City e first time. By the banks of Tiber, they gazed on the dour of the Olympic Stadium stared at the great oval of y blue seats that tonight will rammed full of shouting, culating, baying hordes will- eir downfall with all that they nuster.

more than an hour they ed on the pitch where they will Italy for a place in the World finals. They trained as if their depended on it, tackling so in a practice game that they to be told to ease off, yelling rragement as teams of four or an sprint races against each . By the end, the hair of every f them was soaked in sweat.

ey all know that this is the big the match that has obsessed since they lost to Italy at bley in February, the game has been hanging over them e way along the qualifying the one that has been waiting em at the end of the journey, d either as prize or hment.

e air of serenity that has cterised so much of their -up has begun to disappear as the nerves and the adrena- art to course through them. A or a win, and they can start uring for France next summer another great surge of opti- and excitement about the sh game. A defeat, and they probably be consigned to the tory of a two-legged play-off another group runner-up, on ber 29 and November 15.

ere was an alarm five minutes the end of the session yester- when David Beckham was led e pitch by the team doctor, laining of breathing difficul- hat, presumably, had been ght about by the heavy cold which he has been suffering week. If he is not passed fit, Neville, his Manchester Uni- eam-mate, may deputise for t right wing-back.

lso seems increasingly likely Gareth Southgate, who has a injury, will not be able to lete with Gary Neville for the position in what will probably back three, alongside Tony hs and Sol Campbell. gate's main contribution in ng was to collect balls from d one of the goals.

Despite those scares, though, the day was dominated by the surprise that Hoddle sprung with his choice of captain. Tony Adams had been widely expected to be given the honour on his 31st birthday, but, instead, the England coach turned to Paul Ince, the Liverpool captain who played in Italy with Internazionale for the past two seasons.

The move is bound to be seen in some quarters as a slap in the face for Adams, as well as recognition for Ince's outstanding form both in Italy and since his move to Merseyside, but Hoddle insisted that the reasons were pragmatic, rooted in the long lay-off from which the Arsenal centre half is only just returning.

"The reason I have gone for Paul Ince is that I think he is made for this game," Hoddle said. "He is coming back to Italy, where he has got a lot of respect. The image I have of what the game will be like means that he is tailor-made for it.

"Tony Adams is still on his way back and if he is to start the game I want him 100 per cent focused on his performance. To give him the responsibility of the captaincy might have hindered his chances of doing that. I had a short conversation about it with him and he understood. He will be captain of the back line, anyway.

"I am just taking a weight off his shoulders that he does not need for tomorrow's game. If you are a good captain, you take that sort of thing on the chin anyway. I have got every confidence in Paul leading the team out. He is at the hub of the team and everyone in it respects him."

Hoddle and his squad have managed to remain confident about their chances of securing the point that they need, despite the wealth of statistics that boost Italy's cause. The last time that England beat tonight's opponents on Italian soil was 36 years ago — in Rome. More to the point, perhaps, is that Italy have won all 15 of the World Cup qualifying games that they have played in their capital.

The match may hinge on a moment of magic from Paul Gascoigne or one from Gianfranco Zola; an opportunist strike from Ian Wright or Christian Vieri; or on how the teams react to the atmosphere. Italy will either be inspired or crushed by the weight of expectation, England may freeze amid the hostility.

Hoddle, though, claimed that he would know when his team walked out of the changing-rooms whether they would get the result they needed. "If everyone has 100 per cent belief that we will do the job, then that is it," he said. "I sensed that feeling before we played Poland in May. I don't know what it is, biorhythms or something. It is like trying to get a horse into peak condition. If you do not have that inner belief, you will not achieve what you want.

"We are going to have to defend at the right time, there is no doubt about that, but there is a little extra pressure on them [Italy] with the fact that they have got to win. Even if they are winning 1-0, we could score in the 89th minute and it would still be us who went through.

"We have got a great record away from home. We have won all our qualifying matches in the group away. We have been to a lot of difficult places, but this is one step further." If England can take that step by the banks of the Tiber tonight, it will be truly a giant leap.

ENGLAND (probable; 3-5-2): D Seaman (Arsenal) — G Neville (Manchester United), A Adams (Arsenal), S Campbell (Tottenham Hotspur) — D Beckham (Manchester United), P Gascoigne (Rangers), P Ince (Liverpool), D Batty (Newcastle United), G Le Saux (Chelsea) — E Sheringham (Manchester United), I Wright (Arsenal).

ITALY (probable; 4-4-2): A Peruzzi (Juventus) — F Cannavaro (Parma), A Costacurta (AC Milan), A Nesta (Lazio), P Maldini (AC Milan) — A Lombardo (Crystal Palace), D Albertini (AC Milan), D Baggio (Parma), A di Livio (Juventus) — G Zola (Chelsea), C Vieri (Atlético Madrid)

Referee: M van der Ende (Holland).

TELEVISION: Today: Television: Sky Sports 2: Live coverage, from 6pm. ITV: 10.0pm-midnight Eurosport: Highlights, including all the day's qualifying games and Canada v Mexico (live), from 7pm

RADIO: BBC Radio 5 Live: Live coverage, from 7.30pm Talk Radio: Live coverage, from 7.30pm

EXPERT VIEW

OLIVER HOLT: Italy 1 England 1
ROB HUGHES: Italy 2 England 0
LYNNE TRUSS: Italy 1 England 1
BRIAN GLANVILLE: Italy 1 England 1
STEVE McMANAMAN: England to qualify

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All eyes on Rome, page 1
Maldini adds adventure, page 34
Steve McManaman, page 36
Scotland's task, page 37
Keane resigned, page 37

Gascoigne is put through his paces at the Olympic Stadium under Hoddle's watchful eye. Photograph: Paul Hannah

Groins add to the strain

I used to think it rather quaint when my friend Robert phoned Sheffield Wednesday anxious about the health of David Hirst. It seemed overly assiduous and I said so. "Look, David Thing doesn't care how you are, Robert," I'd say. "When you had that terrible cold last month, did he ring?" But Robert would persist anyway and come off the phone looking glum. "David's thigh/groin/ankle is no better at all," he'd report, and thereafter could not be consoled.

Nowadays, this strangely intimate concern for the wellbeing of footballers is one I completely understand, though I tend to react rather more impatiently at a bad prognosis. "Ill?" I scoff. "Injured? Nonsense. He's being paid to play, isn't he? Look, what's the story here?" I can't tell you how cross I was with Alan Shearer's groin last season; if I were to meet his famous ankle, I fear I would tell it to pull its socks up.

Now David Beckham's got the flu and has "broken down" in training and I'm all strung out with annoyance, waiting for each

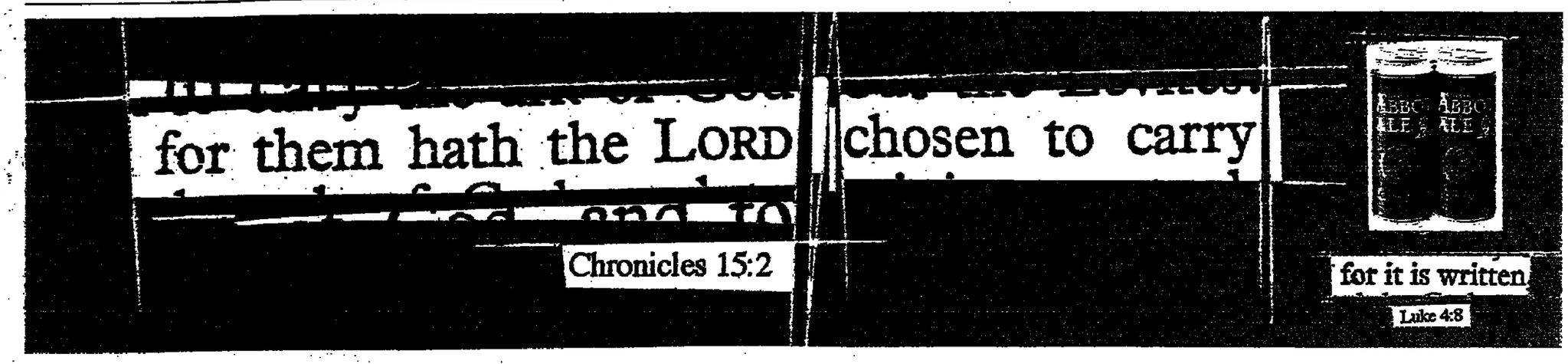
LYNNE TRUSS

infected nasal droplet of news from Rome. "Paul Scholes could replace flu victim David Beckham on Saturday," my football pager informed me on Thursday morning. "That word 'victim' is a bit strong," my companion commented (reasonably). "No it isn't," I snapped. "Don't you understand? This is terrible." David Beckham mugged by a virus! A bad day for England (though not, of course, for the estimable Paul Scholes).

Would Beckham recover? And what about Gareth Southgate's thigh? I started to get hysterical. How much of this stupid illness stuff do they think we can take? Perhaps it's a pack of lies, but how can you tell? If only they had a phone number for fans to call — a sniffles hotline, a thigh strain freephone, an England casualty update.

I wish I could say all this was unselfish concern, but it just isn't. Personally, I've had a miserable cold — a honking cough combined with the mysterious sensation that I've swallowed paint-stripper while being punched on the nose. But do I feel real empathy with Beckham? No. I just very selfishly want him to be fit and bouncy for tonight, because he's brilliant and I demand to see him play.

I formerly thought the word "doubtful" was rather funny in prematch build-ups. If someone was doubtful for England, I'd imagine them poring over a map of the country, shaking their heads as if to say "I don't know about this." Now, I just study the pictures of Beckham and get all doubtful myself. "He looks all right, doesn't he? It's just a little sniff, isn't it? He's got to be all right *tonight*."



هكذا من الإصل

Seaman keeps calm in pursuit of safe passage

ROB HUGHES

takes heart from the England goalkeeper

Only the white marble statues that decorate the approaches to the Olympic Stadium can afford to remain calm and cold as the atmosphere builds up among 83,000 impassioned spectators for tonight's decisive game. You are either Italian or English; you feel the blood rushing, you sense, or try to, the emotions running through players such as David Seaman and Gianfranco Zola.

They, equal in experience with 34 caps apiece, could at a stroke, a shot or a save, determine the outcome not only of a single football match, but also of the immediate destiny of two countries which, whatever indifference anyone may feign, really care about the game and hold it close to their identity.

Nationalism can get in the way. It can make seasoned players malfunction. It can channel their energy in a pulsating rush that they never before experienced; it can make heroes or villains of them in an instant.

"*Experto credite*," the Roman poet Virgil wrote more than a thousand of years before anyone kicked the ball for spectator sport. "Trust one who has proved it."

If I were Cesare Maldini or Glenn Hoddle, I know that Seaman and Zola would be the first to carry my trust, the first on the team-sheet. "We just have to focus that much more," Seaman said yesterday. "I know what is building up. I know that, if I don't concede a goal, that is it — England qualify. Hopefully, I will keep a clean sheet, but it's all about the result, whether it's 0-0 or 4-4."

Yet this man, so laid back he can seem almost horizontal, so practised and so thorough, has not yet seen the lights of Rome. He acknowledges that there is a world of difference between a stadium in daylight and a goalkeeper stretching to catch a ball with what Seaman described as "players jostling, like man-to-man wrestling" in front of him when unfamiliar floodlights glare.

His worries may be eased, for all the splendour beneath the white circular roof around the Olympic Stadium, there is even light, apparently a goalkeeper's dream. Zola, however, can put out those lights, manikin though he is.

"Zola? He poses quite a few questions, from free kicks, from anywhere," Seaman observed. "He has such tiny feet, and he can do a lot of things."

Not in the Chelsea blue but the blue of an enemy that unites Englishmen, Zola did it to devastating effect in February when, pouncing on an error of judgment by Stuart Pearce, he invaded the space behind him and, arrowlike in his accuracy, scored.

The goalkeeper was not Seaman; it was Ian Walker, his deputy. "I was listening to it on my car in a traffic jam on the M25," Seaman recalled. "I was on my way home from seeing the specialist because of a cartilage problem. I felt for Ian. I could feel the pressure even on the M25."

Zola apologised to England for that decisive act. He was speaking in a tunnel beneath the stadium yesterday of mixing sorrow with joy again tonight.

"You cannot waste the mood, so I am not yet tense," the diminutive Italian said. "Saturday is the match day, Friday you have to stay calm, conserve your mental energy, just prepare."

The stubble on Zola's chin could not hide his gentleman's approachability, nor the slightly pained air with which he acknowledged his situation. He earns his living in London, is cherished there and recognises that, when Parma thought him finished and beyond his useful prime, Chelsea gave him new lease of life. And now, for the second time, he must try to utilise it for the destruction of his adopted home.

Paolo Maldini, Italy's favourite son and its captain, admits that the nervousness is rising in him, though it is nerves of anticipation and expectation. "I like the way England plays," Maldini, the younger, said.

"I don't care who is the referee, I am chosen to be captain only because I have the most caps. I will say at the beginning to Paul Ince: 'How are you doing?'" Maldini has learnt his English from Americans, from Nike, his sponsor.

Ince shares his world, has shared the territory on Italian fields; though, of course, tonight he is as intent on destroying Italy's dream as Maldini and Zola are England's. "You cannot waste the mood ..." It has such resonance.

Italy expects and all bar 7,000 in the stadium will pour down that weight of expectation on their chosen XI. Seaman, the last man standing against that pulsating mood, will not know until this morning who partners Zola in attack.

It is not now likely to be Pierluigi Casiraghi, for he looked heavy in training yesterday, the consequence of a hidden groin strain. Instead the younger Christian Vieri, athletic and energetic, is likely to be preferred to the darting brilliance of Alessandro del Piero and Filippo Inzaghi, or indeed a fifth striker, Enrico Chiesa.

Such powers in reserve, and long gone are the days when coaches select more than two at a time.

To Seaman it makes little difference. He knows the shots are coming. He hopes to see them in good time and good light.

MARC ASPLAND

Seaman can ensure that England qualify tonight

Maldini offers spirit of adventure

Brian Glanville on a pivotal figure for the home side, both defensively and if allowed to roam forward

MARC ASPLAND

Paolo Maldini, son of the Italy manager, Cesare, leads his country into battle against England in Rome tonight

A few months ago, Paolo Maldini, who wins his 83rd cap for Italy against England, as captain, could have left Milan for Chelsea. A king's ransom was involved. Milan, surprisingly enough, in the shape of Adriano Galliano, the right-hand man of the owner, Silvio Berlusconi, were willing to sell him.

They would have made a vast profit on a player who initially cost them nothing. Maldini himself would have been given a stupendous contract. At Stamford Bridge he would have joined his three fellow Italy internationals, Roberto Di Matteo, Gianluca Vialli and Gianfranco Zola. But Maldini dug his heels in hard. Milan, he said, was, always had been and always would be his club, and that was where he meant to stay.

When Berlusconi, who seems not to have been consulted, heard about it, he was enraged, and decreed that under no circumstances could Maldini be sold.

The son of the present Italy manager, Cesare Maldini, who joined Milan as a centre back from Triestina in 1954, won caps for Italy and a European Cup medal at Wembley, Paolo made his debut at left back for the club at 18, having come up through the juniors. He has now played as many games for them as did his father.

He is a handsome man, whom Italian women adore but try to importune in vain. He is, though, a family man and has seemingly resisted temptation. A quiet domestic life, far away from the torrid field of battle, suits him well.

WHEREAS his father was essentially a solid, combative centre back or sweeper, Paolo has always been an exciting element, a left back of the modern idiom, eager to attack, to overlap, to take on opponents and to strike for goal, with a formidable left foot. All this and a tackler, too.

Versatility, perhaps, may even have worked against him. At 22, during the 1990 World Cup finals in Italy, he found himself switched from the flank to centre back, where Italy were often to use him in the future. There, he played effectively and forcefully but could seldom gratify his urge to go forward.

This season, with Milan, there has been a still more unexpected translocation. Milan, with far more money than sense, poured forth their treasure in the summer to buy up a host of foreign players, among them Christian Ziege, Germany's attacking left back, and Winston Bogarde, of Ajax and Holland, also a left back.

But, with Milan failing to lure back Christian Panucci from Real Madrid, to whom Arrigo Sacchi had inexplicably sold him, Maldini has been obliged to play at right back. It is a tribute to his professionalism that he has done so without public complaint, though the role is quite foreign to him and he clearly hopes to vacate it as soon as possible. Milan, meanwhile, continue their quest for Panucci.

Last season was a bad one for Milan and not such a good one for Paolo Maldini either. At times the edge seemed to have gone off his game as it did in Euro 96 when he had an uneasy game for Italy against Russia, where he was taken on by the powerful winger, Andrei Kanchelskis, formerly of Manchester United and Everton.

Charming and available to English journalists, who are surprised by his fluent English when they talk to him in the Italy training camp at Coverciano, Maldini still should not be seen as a plaster saint.

Chris Waddle might testify to that. When Milan played Marseilles in a notorious European Cup semi-final that ended with Galliano bringing his team off the field when the floodlights dimmed, Maldini struck Waddle across the back of the neck.

It was, you might say, a blow that rebounded, since a dazed Waddle went on to score a spectacular goal, which he knew little about.

Against England, Maldini will probably play on the left of the defence, which is better than being on the right flank but still not the ideal position for one of his adventurous bent.

And his father, Cesare? He trained his 23 men in the Olympic Stadium yesterday, concentrating first on ball-play — which, according to one Italian journalist, his predecessor, Sacchi, never did — before starting a training game.

At the press conference afterwards he was his usual self, by turns genial and defensive. No, Cerio Ferrara, the injured centre back, had not played in the game as a precaution. The team doctor would decide whether he was fit; if not, there were plenty of good alternatives.

He fenced with questions about Gigi Casiraghi, who has put on weight and appears to have a groin strain. Christian Vieri remains favourite to start. "I say again," Maldini insisted, "we always try to win. This time, we have the necessity to win." He told us, too, that the suspended Di Matteo is planning to come out at his own request to be with the party.

So, we wait to see whether Ian Wright, who has notionally overtaken Cliff Bastin's scoring record at Arsenal, can emulate Bastin by scoring for England against Italy, as Bastin did when the countries met for the first time in Rome in 1933.

'He is always keen to take on opponents and strike for goal'

Giggs looks ahead to lifetime's ambition

HE HAS won titles and medals beyond the dreams of many a 23-year-old, has been to Wembley and has scored goals that rank in the pantheon of the best seen at Old Trafford and beyond, but Ryan Giggs believes nothing will match the feeling he gets when he steps on to the field in Brussels this evening. He will do so as the captain of Wales, the second-youngest player to have been accorded the honour, and, in his words: "This will be the greatest moment of my life. I will be so proud to lead Wales out."

No matter that he is leading a small nation in a game of little significance, at least to the Welsh, when the national gaze is turned to Rome. Always irritated by the question of whether he would rather play for England, he said: "I am Welsh and am proud of it. It never crosses my mind that I could play for someone else because I can't. I was born in Cardiff and my parents and grandparents are all Welsh. I am looking forward to this game immensely. Leading out my country will be a dream come true."

A dream, perhaps, but with an inexperienced side whose make-up is yet to be confirmed, Wales face a daunting task. Belgium need to win if they are to ensure second place in World Cup qualifying group seven and a play-off place, while Wales are missing key personnel, including Gary Speed, the regular captain, who is absent through suspension.

Eleven do-or-die England matches

FIRST 11 ELEVEN

1. England 0 Soviet Union 1 (Gothenburg)
World Cup, 17-6-58
After finishing level in group four, the two teams had to play off for a place in the quarter-finals. Ilyn's goal put Walter Winterbottom's men on the next plane home
ENGLAND: McDonald, Howe, Wright, Banks, Clayton, Slater, Brabrook, Broadbent, Kevan, Haynes, A'court

2. England 1 Poland 1 (Wembley)
World Cup qualifier, 17-10-73
A goalkeeper, apparently wearing a big red nose and a revolving bow-tie stopped almost everything England threw at him, Shilton gifted Poland a goal and the Germans had to hold the 1974 World Cup without their old mates
ENGLAND: Shilton, Madeley, Hughes, McFarland, Hunter, Bell, Currie, Channon, Chivers (Hector), Clarke, Peters

3. Czechoslovakia 2 England 1 (Bratislava)
European championship qualifier, 30-10-75
Mike Channon gave England the lead but the Czechs bounced England all over Bratislava "They were worse than Argentina in 1966," Don Revie turned
ENGLAND: Clemance, Madeley, McFarland (Watson), Todd, Gillard, Bell, Francis, Keegan, Channon (Thomas), Clarke, Macdonald

4. England 1 Hungary 0 (Wembley)
World Cup qualifier, 18-11-81
Romania's surprise home defeat by Switzerland gave England an unexpected chance to qualify for Spain 82. Paul Mariner's elegant stumble over the ball-assured that they did
ENGLAND: Shilton, Neal, Thompson, Martin, Mills, Robson, McDermott, Brooking, Coppell (Morley), Mariner, Keegan

5. England 0 Spain 0 (Madrid)
World Cup, 5-7-82
Needing a win to go into the semi-finals, Ron Greenwood brings on permanently-injured stars, Keegan and Brooking, as late substitutes. Good move Ron, they missed glorious chances
ENGLAND: Shilton, Mills, Butcher, Thompson, Sansom, Wilkins, Robson, Francis, Rix (Keegan), Mariner, Woodcock (Brooking)

6. England 3 Poland 0 (Monterrey)
World Cup, 11-6-86
The match that made Saint Gary a world star
ENGLAND: Shilton, Stevens, Fenwick, Butcher, Sansom, Steven, Hoddle, Reid, Hodge, Lineker, Beardsley

7. Yugoslavia 1 England 4 (Belgrade)
European championship qualifier, 11-11-87
Four goals in the first 25 minutes made it a stroll
ENGLAND: Shilton, Stevens, Sansom, Adams, Butcher, Steven Robson (Reid), Webb (Hoddle), Beardsley, Lineker, Barnes

8. England 1 Holland 3 (Düsseldorf)
European championship, 15-6-88
You 'Orrible Little Basten said The Sun *after the Dutch master's hat-trick put England out*
ENGLAND: Shilton, Stevens, Wright, Adams, Sansom, Steven, Hoddle, Robson, Barnes, Beardsley, Lineker

9. Poland 0 England 0 (Katowice)
World Cup qualifier, 11-10-89
If Tarasiewicz's last-minute shot had been a foot lower, England would not have qualified for Italia 90, there would have been no tears in Turin, no Gazzamania and no comedy breasts at Luton airport
ENGLAND: Shilton, Stevens, Walker, Butcher, Pearce, Rocastle, McMahon, Robson, Waddle, Beardsley, Lineker

10. Poland 1 England 1 (Poznan)
European championship qualifier, 13-11-91
Andy Gray, Geoff Thomas, Andy Sinton — no wonder we needed Lineker's goal 13 minutes from time to book a place in Euro 92
ENGLAND: Woods, Dixon, Pearce, Gray (Smith), Walker, Mabbutt, Platt, Thomas, Rocastle, Lineker, Sinton (Daley)

11. Holland 2 England 0 (Rotterdam)
World Cup qualifier, 13-10-93
Take Ronald Koeman, a German referee and an England manager with a loosening grip on reality and what have you got? The end of an American dream, but the the best football documentary in the world ... ever
ENGLAND: Seaman, Parker, Adams, Pallister, Dongo, Palmer (Sinton), Platt, Ince, Sharpe, Merson (Wright), Sheerer

Compiled by Richard Whitehead

The fears of a clown are allayed as Tomaszewski watches another England near-miss. Photograph: David Jones

WHAT IF? HOW LATVIA CAN PUT ENGLAND THROUGH

FEW would wish ill on Scotland when they play Latvia at Celtic Park today (Russell Kempson writes). Yet, if the Scots should lose or draw against Latvia, it would leave the way clear for England to qualify automatically for the finals. By virtue of Scotland's afternoon kick-off, Glenn Hoddle, the England coach, and his players could enter the Olympic Stadium in Rome this evening knowing exactly what they have got to do against Italy — nothing.

Q: So, England can reach the finals automatically, even if they lose to Italy?
A: *Yes. They already have 12 points in the runners-up table and it is unlikely that anybody can beat that total. A draw for the Scots against Latvia would give them 11 points.*
Q: But can't Spain get 14 points in group six?
A: *Yes, but they are going to win their group. They are hardly going to lose against the Faeroe Islands today.*
Q: And Belgium? By beating Wales, can't they finish level with England on 12 points in group seven?
A: *Yes, but England enjoy a comfortable seven-goal advantage if it does come down to goal difference.*
Q: And what about Austria?
A: *If Scotland lose or draw, then Austria win group four.*
Q: What about other countries in contention for a runners-up place? Can they overtake England?
A: *No. Yugoslavia and Croatia have finished their games against the first, third and fourth-placed teams in their groups and have only 11 points. Portugal have done likewise and have nine points. Russia, by beating Bulgaria, can still get only 11 points.*
Q: Can Scotland miss out altogether?
A: *Yes. If they draw against Latvia, Sweden would move above them into second place in group four with a four-goal victory against Estonia. If the Scots lose against Latvia, any win for the Swedes will do.*
Q: When will the draw for the play-offs be made?
A: *In Zurich on Monday at 4pm BST. It will not be seeded.*
Q: And when will the play-offs be played?
A: *First legs on October 29, second legs on November 15.*

World Cup European zone

* *qualified for finals*

GROUP ONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Denmark	7	5	1	1	14	6	16
Greece	7	4	1	2	11	4	13
Croatia	7	3	3	1	14	11	12
Bosnia	8	3	0	5	9	14	9
Slovenia	7	0	1	6	4	17	1

RESULTS: Greece 2 Slovenia 0; Greece 3 Bosnia-Herzegovina 0; Slovenia 0 Denmark 2; Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 Croatia 4; Denmark 2 Greece 1; Slovenia 1 Bosnia-Herzegovina 2; Croatia 0 Greece 1; Croatia 1 Denmark 1; Bosnia-Herzegovina 0 Greece 1; Croatia 3 Slovenia 3; Denmark 4 Slovenia 0; Greece 0 Croatia 1; Denmark 2 Bosnia-Herzegovina 0; Bosnia-Herzegovina 3 Denmark 0; Croatia 3 Bosnia-Herzegovina 2; Slovenia 0 Greece 3; Denmark 3 Croatia 1; Bosnia-Herzegovina 1 Slovenia 0.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Greece v Denmark; Slovenia v Croatia.

GROUP THREE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
* Norway	8	6	2	0	21	2	20
Hungary	7	3	2	2	9	7	11
Finland	7	3	1	3	10	11	10
Switzerland	7	2	1	4	8	12	7
Azerbaijan	7	1	0	6	3	17	3

RESULTS: Norway 5 Azerbaijan 0; Azerbaijan 1 Switzerland 0, Hungary 1 Finland 0; Finland 2 Switzerland 3; Norway 3 Hungary 0; Switzerland 0 Norway 1; Azerbaijan 0 Hungary 3, Azerbaijan 1 Finland 2; Switzerland 1 Hungary 0; Norway 1 Finland 1; Finland 3 Azerbaijan 0; Hungary 1 Norway 1, Finland 0 Norway 4; Hungary 1 Switzerland 1; Switzerland 1 Finland 2, Azerbaijan 0 Norway 1, Hungary 3 Azerbaijan 1; Norway 5 Switzerland 0.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Finland v Hungary; Switzerland v Azerbaijan.

GROUP FIVE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
* Bulgaria	7	6	0	1	16	5	18
Russia	7	4	2	1	15	3	14
Israel	8	4	1	3	9	7	13
Cyprus	7	2	1	4	8	15	7
Luxembourg	7	0	0	7	2	20	0

Runners-up table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
1 Italy (2)	5	3	2	0	5	0	11
2 Yugoslavia (6)	6	3	2	1	7	5	11
3 Scotland (4)	5	3	1	1	6	2	10
4 Belgium (7)	5	3	0	2	8	9	9
5 Russia (5)	6	2	2	1	8	3	8
6 Ireland (8)	5	2	1	2	7	5	7
7 Greece (1)	5	2	1	2	6	4	7
8 Ukraine (9)	5	1	2	2	3	5	5
9 Hungary (3)	5	1	2	2	3	6	5

* Records compiled from results against first, third and fourth-placed sides in group.** Figure in brackets indicates group

RESULTS: Israel 2 Bulgaria 1; Russia 4 Cyprus 0; Luxembourg 1 Bulgaria 2; Israel 1 Russia 1; Cyprus 2 Israel 0; Luxembourg 0 Russia 4, Cyprus 1 Bulgaria 3, Israel 1 Luxembourg 0; Cyprus 1 Russia 1; Luxembourg 0 Israel 3; Bulgaria 4 Cyprus 1; Israel 2 Cyprus 0; Russia 3 Luxembourg 0; Bulgaria 4 Luxembourg 0, Russia 2 Israel 0; Bulgaria 1 Israel 0; Luxembourg 1 Cyprus 3; Bulgaria 1 Russia 0.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Cyprus v Luxembourg; Russia v Bulgaria.

GROUP SIX

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
* Spain	9	7	2	0	23	5	23
Yugoslavia	9	6	2	1	24	7	20
Slovakia	9	5	1	3	18	11	16
Czech Republic	9	4	1	4	13	8	13
Faeroe Isles	9	2	0	7	9	28	6
Malta	9	0	0	9	2	32	0

RESULTS: Yugoslavia 3 Faeroe Isles 1; Yugoslavia 6 Malta 0; Faeroe Isles 1 Slovakia 2; Faeroe Isles 2 Spain 6; Czech Republic 6 Malta 0; Slovakia 6 Malta 0; Faeroe Isles 1 Yugoslavia 8; Czech Republic 0 Spain 0; Slovakia 3 Faeroe Isles 0; Yugoslavia 1 Czech Republic 0; Spain 4 Slovakia 1; Spain 2 Yugoslavia 0; Malta 0 Spain 3; Spain 4 Malta 0; Malta 0 Slovakia 2; Czech Republic 1 Yugoslavia 2; Malta 1 Faeroe Isles 2; Yugoslavia 1 Spain 1; Faeroe Isles 2 Malta 1; Spain 1 Czech Republic 0; Yugoslavia 2 Slovakia 0; Czech Republic 2 Faeroe Isles 0; Slovakia 2 Czech Republic 1; Faeroe Isles 0 Czech Republic 2; Slovakia 1 Yugoslavia 1, Malta 0 Czech Republic 1, Slovakia 1 Spain 2.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Czech Republic v Slovakia; Malta v Yugoslavia; Spain v Faeroe Isles.

GROUP SEVEN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Holland	7	6	0	1	26	4	18
Belgium	7	5	0	2	17	9	15
Turkey	7	4	1	2	21	9	13
Wales	7	2	1	4	18	18	7
San Marino	8	0	0	8	0	42	0

RESULTS: San Marino 0 Wales 5; Wales 6 San Marino 0; Belgium 2 Turkey 1; Wales 1 Holland 3; San Marino 0 Belgium 3; Holland 7 Wales 1; Turkey 7 San Marino 0; Wales 0 Turkey 0; Belgium 0 Holland 3; Wales 1 Belgium 2; Holland 4 San Marino 0; Turkey 1 Holland 0; Turkey 1 Belgium 3; San Marino 0 Holland 6; Belgium 6 San Marino 0; Turkey 6 Wales 4; Holland 3 Belgium 1; San Marino 0 Turkey 5.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Holland v Turkey; Belgium v Wales.

GROUP NINE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Germany	9	5	4	0	19	6	19
Ukraine	9	5	2	2	8	6	17
Portugal	9	4	4	1	11	4	16
Armenia	9	1	5	3	8	15	8
N Ireland	9	1	4	4	6	9	7
Albania	9	1	1	7	4	16	4

RESULTS: Northern Ireland 0 Ukraine 1; Armenia 0 Portugal 0; Northern Ireland 1 Armenia 1; Ukraine 2 Portugal 1; Albania 0 Portugal 3; Armenia 1 Germany 5; Albania 1 Armenia 1; Germany 1 Northern Ireland 1; Portugal 1 Ukraine 0; Northern Ireland 2 Albania 0; Portugal 0 Germany 0; Albania 0 Ukraine 1; Northern Ireland 0 Portugal 0; Ukraine 2 Northern Ireland 1; Albania 2 Germany 3; Armenia 0 Northern Ireland 0; Germany 2 Ukraine 0; Ukraine 1 Armenia 1; Portugal 2 Albania 0; Ukraine 0 Germany 0; Northern Ireland 1 Germany 3; Ukraine 1 Albania 0; Portugal 3 Armenia 1; Germany 1 Portugal 1, Armenia 3 Albania 0; Albania 1 Northern Ireland 0 (in Zurich); Germany 4 Armenia 0

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Germany v Albania; Portugal v Northern Ireland; Armenia v Ukraine.

هكذا من الإصل

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Ince puts the Guv'nor to rest

In the search for leadership, England have turned to a hard man with a soft centre

MARC ASPLAND

Ince, the latest in a long line of outstanding Liverpool midfield players, has settled into the routine in the legendary Anfield boot room, where his open approach to life has found a natural home

His nickname is like a remnant of a former life. It was nice for a while, because it started off as a joke between friends, but it got twisted around until it began to be used against him. People said it was evidence of megalomania. Some said it showed a craving for respect, others that he was forced out of Old Trafford because of it. None of it was true, but Paul Ince is an older, wiser man now and he does not want a nickname any more. England's captain in Rome tonight wants to consign The Guv'nor to the past.

He does not need it now, anyway. Most people, however begrudgingly, accept that he and the recently-sidelined Roy Keane are the most accomplished midfield players in Great Britain. He is at the peak of his game, captain of Liverpool and the team's driving force, captain of the England team that will stride out at the Olympic Stadium tonight for the country's most important game since Euro 96. Never has he been more dominant: never, in fact, more gubernatorial.

Yet that is not the reason why he wants to bring the era of The Guv'nor to a dignified close. It is more to do with the fact that that nickname more than anything else has burdened him with an image, a snarling, prickly, arrogant image, that those who meet him more than fleetingly know to be utterly false.

To the outsider, there was always something faintly sinister and intimidatory about it. The Guv'nor: it conjured up scenes from films such as *Get Carter* or old episodes of *The Sweeney* and it was made worse because of the misconception that Ince, like some sort of swaggering enforcer, insisted on its use. The reality, it transpires, is rather different.

"I want to get this straight," Ince says. "The Guv'nor was not about respect. It wasn't like that at all. When I was at West Ham, I used to go to a snooker hall in Dagenham in East London, where I come from, every time we finished training. Every time anyone played a good shot, a long red or something like that, whoever it was would shout out 'who's the guv'nor' and the rest of us would say 'yeah, yeah, all right'.

"When I went up to United and we had shooting practice and if I scored a good goal, I would shout out 'who's the guvnaaaa' like that. Then after a while, Kiddo [Brian Kidd, United's assistant manager] started calling me the Guv'nor and all of a sudden it just got round like wildfire. The crowd was saying 'Paul Ince is the Guv'nor and I got GUV on my car and it started like that. It wasn't intentional. I didn't mean anything by it. It just got out of hand — in a nice way, not a horrible way.

"But the papers have said things about 'the self-proclaimed Guv'nor'. That is a load of rubbish. I never went to anyone at the club and said 'listen, I'm the Guv'nor, you call me the Guv'nor or I'll do this and that'. That was never the case. I couldn't go into Man United with the likes of Robbo [Bryan Robson] and Brucey [Steve Bruce] there and say 'I'm the Guv'nor' because I wasn't like that.

"When I first came here to Liverpool, a few of the boys said 'all right Guv, all right Guv' and to be honest, I don't like it any more. It was a phase that happened at Manchester United. When I went to Inter Milan, it never really happened. That was when I got rid of it.

"When I came back here, Adidas sent me a pair of boots for my first game with Guv'nor on top of the boots and I said 'listen, I don't want that. That was years ago. I want to get rid of that tag. I don't want to be called that any more.' You know, I'm nearly 30 years of age. It's about time people started calling me Paul Ince."

As he talks in the players' canteen at Liverpool's Melwood training ground, Ince breaks off occasionally to chat with the staff who wander in and out. He knows them all by name, even though he has only been at the club for six weeks. Liverpool have one of the friendlier set-ups in the FA Carling Premiership, probably the most open bunch of players, and Ince fits in perfectly.

If he can seem sullen or a little suspicious on a peremptory meeting, it is soon apparent it is just a façade. Behind it, there is a sincere, quietly-spoken man, sharp and quick-witted, patriotic and so devoted to his family that he resisted Internazionale's pleas for him to stay in Italy and returned to England in the summer because he was concerned about the schooling of his young son, Thomas. He is, in fact, the antithesis of what those who have never met him expect.

"I have mellowed with age," Ince smiles. "When I was young, 21 or 22, no one could tell me anything. I'm not afraid to say it. I had a big chip on my shoulder, probably two shoulders. I would react to anything. It was only when I went to United and I was in the same team as Bryan Robson that that changed. If he said anything, I would listen to him.

"When I was 24 or 25, I realised that I wasn't getting anywhere by kicking out, shouting at referees, having this attitude problem. I had Thomas when I was 25. I thought 'hang about, we've got one kid in the family now, we don't need two'. I thought I had to start acting more sensibly, start acting my age. That was when it all started to change.

"All of a sudden, I started to play well and people started to notice, but there was still this perception that I was a horrible person off the field. I wasn't, or at least I didn't intend to be. It was just the way I was, youth, exuberance, but now I look back and think I must have been a right horrible so-and-so when I was that age because I can remember the things that I did.

"As you get older, other things take over. My family is more important to me than anything else in the world. Once it was football. That's changed. I used to go home and take my football home to my family. When I had Thomas, I would come home and see his face and even if we had got beat, Thomas would want to play something and that has changed me. That is when it turned around for me as a footballer. I could either have gone uphill or downhill and having Thomas made me go uphill."

It was a steep ascent. After the bitterness of his move from West Ham United, he established himself as a favourite at Old Trafford because of his fine, uncompromising tackling. He helped to bring United their first championship since 1967 as part of the great side that spawned the present champions, the side of Bruce, Robson, Andrei Kanchelskis, Mark Hughes and Ryan Giggs.

United supporters were dismayed when Alex Ferguson sold both him and Kanchelskis two years ago and, after a shaky start in Milan, Ince soon became a hero at the San Siro, too, scoring ten goals against the parsimonious Serie A defences last season before Liverpool tempted him back to England and paid Inter more than £4 million for his services.

OLIVER HOLT

By then, Ince had long established himself at the heart of the England midfield. He has won 33 caps and played a starring role in Euro 96. But for Terry Venables's curious decision to ignore him for a year after he missed the Umbro Cup tournament, his international record would have been even longer.

Now, he is fighting the last of the labels, the one that has got him down as a hard man, the ball-winner that Liverpool needed to complete their championship jigsaw. His revisionism is grounded in his goalscoring and flashes of creative brilliance, like the pass that split the Polish defence in Katowice in May and led to Alan Shearer's opening goal.

"If you have got players like Macca [Steve McManaman], Beckham and Gazza alongside you, you get the ball and give it to them so they can use their talent. If they go and lose the ball, they are relying on me to go and use my talent to get it back. It is not like I am a dog for them, because I am a lot better than that, but you have to know your limitations.

"We have all got our own talents. Some talents will get people off their seats by beating three or four men, some won't. I'm the kind of player fans can relate to because I give them my heart, 110 per cent every game.

"What I don't like is the hard-man image. I always say to myself: 'What is a hard man? Is it someone who just kicks people, who tackles dirty, or someone who wins the ball?' If going in for a 50-50 ball and winning it nine times out of ten makes me a hard man, then so be it, but people who just kick people off the ball are called hard men too, and that is an insult to me because there is more to my game than that.

"I score goals, I can pass the ball, not many people get past me and I tackle well. That is the most important thing to me. I tackle fairly. Nobody can ever say to me that I am a dirty player, that I am malicious, that I go out to try to do people. If they say anything about Paul Ince, they have to say he is a hard tackler, but he tackles fair. He is a hard man in that respect. He wants to win."

Glenn Hoddle's decision to make him captain ahead of Tony Adams suggests that that message is starting to be heard and tonight, in Rome, he will go out to prove it again. Not the Guv'nor, not a ball-winner, not a hard man, not the man you expect. Just the captain, Paul Ince.

ITALY VERSUS ENGLAND

Today: Italy v England; Georgia v Poland.

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
England	7	6	0	1	15	2	18
Italy	7	5	2	0	11	1	17
Poland	7	3	1	3	10	9	10
Georgia	7	2	1	4	4	9	7
Moldova	8	0	0	8	2	21	0

RESULTS: Moldova 0 England 3; Moldova 1 Italy 3; England 2 Poland 1; Italy 1 Georgia 0; Georgia 0 England 2; Poland 2 Moldova 1; England 0 Italy 1; Italy 3 Moldova 0; Poland 0 Italy 0; Italy 3 Poland 0, England 2 Georgia 0; Poland 0 England 2, Georgia 2 Moldova 0; Poland 4 Georgia 1; Georgia 0 Italy 0; England 4 Moldova 0; Moldova 0 Georgia 1; Moldova 0 Poland 3

		Caps	Goals			Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS:							
A Peruzzi	(Juventus, 27)	18	-	D Albertini	(AC Milan, 26)	46	3
G Pagliuca	(Inter, 30)	32	-	L Di Biagio	(Roma, 26)	0	-
DEFENDERS:				E Di Francesco	(Roma, 28)	0	-
C Ferrara	(Juventus, 30)	42	1	D Baggio	(Parma, 26)	41	7
A Costacurta	(AC Milan, 31)	48	2	D Fuser	(Lazio, 28)	14	-
A Nesta	(Lazio, 21)	6	6	FORWARDS:			
F Cannavaro	(Parma, 24)	9	9	P Casiraghi	(Lazio, 28)	42	12
P Maldini	(AC Milan, 29)	82	5	C Vieri	(A Madrid, 24)	5	1
A Benarrivo	(Parma, 29)	21	-	F Inzaghi	(Juventus, 24)	2	-
C Panucci	(Real Madrid, 24)	7	1	G Zola	(Chelsea, 31)	34	10
F Galante	(Inter, 23)	0	-	E Chiesa	(Parma, 26)	5	3
MIDFIELD:				A Del Piero	(Juventus, 22)	14	7
A Di Livio	(Juventus, 31)	18	-	Coach: Cesare Maldini			
A Lombardo	(Crystal Palace, 31)	18	3				

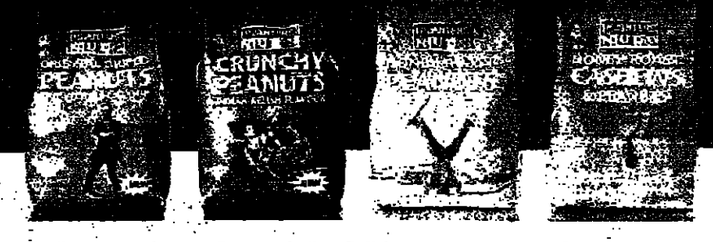
		Caps	Goals			Caps	Goals
GOALKEEPERS:							
D Seaman	(Arsenal, 34)	37	-	P Gascoigne	(Rangers, 30)	52	10
N Martyn	(Leeds, 31)	4	-	D Beckham	(Man Utd, 22)	10	-
I Walker	(Tottenham, 25)	3	-	D Batty	(Newcastle, 28)	26	-
DEFENDERS:				N Butt	(Man Utd, 22)	3	-
G Neville	(Man Utd, 22)	23	-	P Merson	(Middlesbrough, 29)	15	-
P Neville	(Man Utd, 20)	7	-	S McManaman	(Liverpool, 25)	18	-
G Le Saux	(Chelsea, 28)	20	1	FORWARDS:			
A Hinchcliffe	(Everton, 28)	3	-	P Scholes	(Man Utd, 22)	4	2
A Adams	(Arsenal, 31)	47	4	E Sheringham	(Man Utd, 31)	28	8
G Southgate	(Aston Villa, 27)	20	-	R Fowler	(Liverpool, 22)	6	1
G Pallister	(Man Utd, 32)	22	-	I Wright	(Arsenal, 33)	28	9
S Campbell	(Tottenham, 23)	10	-	S Collymore	(Aston Villa, 26)	3	-
MIDFIELD:				Coach: Glenn Hoddle			
P Ince	(Liverpool, 29)	33	2				

1933: Rome - Italy 1, England 1
1934: Highbury - England 3, Italy 2
1939: Milan - Italy 2, England 2
1948: Turin - Italy 0, England 4
1949: Tottenham - England 2, Italy 0
1952: Florence - Italy 1, England 1
1959: Wembley - England 2, Italy 2
1961: Rome - Italy 2, England 3
1948: Turin - Italy 2, England 0
1973: Wembley - England 0, Italy 1
1976: New York - England 3, Italy 2
1976: Rome - Italy 2, England 0
1977: Wembley - England 2, Italy 0
1980: Turin - Italy 1, England 0
1985: Mexico City - England 1, Italy 2
1989: Wembley - England 0, Italy 0
1990: Bari - Italy 2, England 1
1997: Wembley - England 0, Italy 1
1997: Nantes - England 2, Italy 0

TELEVISION: Sky Sports 2, live coverage, from 6pm. ITV: 10.0pm-midnight. **RADIO:** BBC Radio 5 Live, live coverage, from 7.30pm. Talk Radio live coverage, from 7.30pm

Referee: Mario van der Ende (Holland), FIFA official since 1990

TRY NEW PLANTERS AND SAY GOODBYE TO ALL OTHER NUTS.



One tongue-tingling taste of our new nuts and you'll happily kiss all others goodbye.

Say hello to Planters new Crunchy Peanuts Indian Relish, or our spicy Oriental Dipped.

Get reacquainted with our Dry Roast or Honey Roast Peanuts.

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Albeit, an octave or two higher.

PLANTERS

هكذا من الإصل

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

Confidence remains sky-high after keeping low profile

McMANAMAN'S WORLD

You would hardly think there was a game on. Tucked away, as we are, in a very quiet hotel on the outskirts of Rome and with no access to the media or the public, there has been remarkably little pressure on the players before the contest today.

I can appreciate that there is an intense interest in the match against Italy back home. It is obviously a match of huge importance: the players understand that and we are all absolutely desperate to reach the World Cup finals.

Yet there has been no tension, no atmosphere, because we are so isolated. We arrived at the airport on Wednesday, went through passport control and went back outside to the runway, where a bus was waiting to take us to the hotel.

Since then, we have been either training, eating or relaxing in our rooms. That is it. I have never been to Rome before, but there is no chance of discovering if it is as beautiful as is often suggested. This is a serious business and all our thoughts are concentrated on one thing.

The lack of pressure in the build-up is a good thing. This is a young England squad and it would be foolish to communicate the tension back home into nerves at this stage. We are so relaxed that we could be on holiday, apart from the absence of sightseeing, of course.

Even the staff at the hotel haven't bothered winding us up because most of them don't speak English. As a result, it has been very, very low-key and most of our time has been spent in our rooms, resting — not even reading the newspapers. Most of the lads have occupied their time by playing computer games.

There are the obvious exceptions. Ian Wright is hyper, he is always on the go, doing something or other, just a bundle of energy. Gazza is the same and, between them, the pair do a lot in lifting the spirit in the squad. Wherever there is a noise, wherever anything is happening, one or the other will be there.

On the flight out to Italy, Gazza was in the cockpit, probably trying to fly the plane. I was sitting next to Robbie Fowler and Paul Ince and it didn't go down well with them because they are both terrified of flying. Every bump or dip had them screaming that Gazza was at the controls.

Training has been fairly relaxed, too. We have been concentrating on practice games and a few skills, as well as crossing and shooting. We have trained every day and will even have a session today, when we will work on set-pieces and special moves.

The emphasis, though, has been on relaxing the squad, keeping everything as calm as possible in what was potentially a fevered build-up. Even before we left England, we could sense the pressure being heaped on the Italy squad and our manager wanted to avoid that. I have noted with interest the thoughts of those Italians who are playing in England. They seem to think that they have gained an advantage with their experience in the FA Carling Premiership, but I am not so sure.

Perhaps Gianfranco Zola knows a little bit more about Tony Adams, but we certainly know a lot more about him and, as he will play a significant part in Italy's strategy, then England have a certain advantage as well.

Zola is an excellent player. He only managed 25 minutes against Liverpool last Sunday, but even during that time, you could see what a good player he is. His control is superb and I like his movement. He is a dangerous player in the way that he finds space and exploits it so well.

The Italian players have been quite complimentary about our squad, suggesting that we have improved over the past few seasons and are now a real threat to them. What amuses me is the suggestion that England's performance in the summer against Italy and Manchester United's result against Juventus in the European Cup Champions' League have given England a huge boost in confidence. They haven't, purely because we were confident already. I wrote after our defeat against Italy at Wembley back in February that we still felt we could go to Rome and win and that feeling has persisted ever since.

We had our opportunities at Wembley and we came away feeling that we should have won. There is no question of us feeling inferior, because we saw a year ago that we could beat Italy. In fact, in many ways, our system is better suited to playing away from home, so Rome certainly holds no fear for us.

I know there was a bad reaction to our performance at Wembley against Italy, but playing in the match, you get a very different perspective. We pounded away at the Italy defence and put pressure on them for much of the match, only to lose to a breakaway goal.

In Rome, it will be quite the opposite. There is little doubt that the Italians will pound away at us, because they have to win. Of course, being Italians, they won't go all out, because it is not their way. They will play a cagey game and still try to tempt us forward, looking for the break.

But they will have the majority of possession, purely because they are at home. That is the way with international football. What England have to do is to ensure that we do not get drawn into going all out and get punished.

If you look at our away games so far, then it is obvious that we have succeeded tactically. We haven't pursued the usual English pressing style, we have been tactically aware, sitting back and controlling the game. Strangely enough, the Italians haven't done that, apart from the Wembley performance. They dropped points in Poland and Georgia. If we can repeat our performances from the away games against those two countries, we can be confident of getting a result.

Not that I would even remotely suggest that this is anything other than a very tough game. How often do Italy lose at home? I suspect that they would have looked at the group and been happy, at the start, with the prospect of having to win their final game at home to reach the finals.

We are under no illusions. We will have to produce our best performance of the qualifying competition if we are to reach the World Cup finals. History is against us as well. Everyone has been at pains this week to point out that we haven't won in Italy for more than 30 years.

But then we aren't playing history. It is the here and now, and the past counts for nothing. It doesn't matter that we haven't won over here for some time. It matters immensely that we win this evening. Italy are favourites, but we are confident and calm. I just hope that, when I next write this column, we will be celebrating a famous result in the Eternal City.

STEVE MCMANAMAN

AFTER TODAY'S MATCH ENGLAND WILL STILL HAVE A LOT TO LEARN.

Good luck to England in their final World Cup qualifier against Italy.

WEEKEND MATCHES

Kick-off 3.0 unless stated
Pools coupon numbers in brackets

TODAY

World Cup
European zone
Qualifying group two
(31) Italy v England (at Olympic Stadium, Rome, 7.45) ....

Group four
(35) Scotland v Latvia (at Celtic Park, Glasgow) ....

Group seven
(42) Belgium v Wales (*in Brussels, 7.0*) ....

Group eight
(46) *Ireland v Romania* (at Lansdowne Road) ....

Group nine
(49) Portugal v Northern Ireland (5.30)

Nationwide League
First division
(1) Reading v Crewe ....
(2) Stockport v Oxford Utd ....
(3) Swindon v Bury ....

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nottm Forest	10	7	1	2	15	5	22
Bradford	10	5	3	2	14	13	18
Swindon	10	5	3	2	13	13	18
West Brom	10	5	3	2	12	9	18
Sheff Utd	8	5	3	0	11	4	18
Charlton	9	5	1	3	20	14	16
QPR	10	5	1	4	13	16	16
Middlesbro	8	4	2	2	13	9	14
Port Vale	10	4	2	4	13	13	14
Birmingham	9	4	2	3	12	7	14
Stoke	9	4	2	3	30	10	14
Sunderland	10	4	1	5	14	15	13
Wolves	10	3	4	3	12	12	13
Norwich	10	4	1	5	8	17	13
Stockport	10	3	3	4	16	13	12
Crewe	9	4	0	5	13	14	12
Bury	10	2	5	3	11	14	11
Tranmere	10	3	1	6	14	14	10
Oxford Utd	10	3	1	6	14	16	10
Reading	10	3	1	6	10	18	10
Man City	9	2	3	4	16	13	9
Ipswich	8	2	3	3	10	11	9
Portsmouth	10	2	3	5	12	17	8
Huddersfield	9	0	4	5	5	14	4

Second division
(4) Burnley v Carlisle ....
(5) Chesterfield v Wigan ....
(6) Fulham v Blackpool ....
(7) Gillingham v Wycombe ....
(8) Grimsby v Northampton ....
(-) Luton v Plymouth ....
(9) Millwall v Oldham ....
(10) Preston v Bournemouth ....
(11) Southend v Bristol City ....
(—) Walsall v Wrexham ....
(12) York v Brentford ....

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Watford	10	7	2	1	18	8	23
Northampton	10	6	3	1	12	5	21
Bristol Rovers	10	4	5	1	14	9	17
Chesterfield	10	4	5	1	11	7	17
Preston	10	4	4	2	11	7	16
Millwall	8	5	0	3	14	9	15
Gillingham	10	4	3	3	12	11	15
Oldham	10	3	5	2	17	17	14
York	10	4	2	4	11	12	14
Fulham	10	4	2	4	10	9	14
Wycombe	10	3	4	3	17	17	13
Wigan	10	4	1	5	15	14	13
Blackpool	10	4	1	5	15	19	13
Bournemouth	10	3	4	3	11	9	13
Grimsby	10	3	4	3	9	10	13
Brentford	10	3	3	4	11	14	12
Wrexham	9	3	2	4	15	13	11
Carlisle	10	3	2	5	13	17	11
Bristol City	9	3	2	4	12	10	11
Walsall	10	3	2	5	12	14	11
Southend	10	3	2	5	9	16	11
Plymouth	10	1	6	3	9	12	9
Luton	10	1	3	6	5	18	6
Burnley	10	0	5	5	5	11	5

Third division
(13) Chester v Brighton ....
(14) Doncaster v Hartlepool ....
(—) Exeter v Swansea ....
(15) Hull v Scarborough ....
(16) Leyton Orient v Rotherham ....
(17) Lincoln v Torquay ....
(18) Mansfield v Cambridge Utd ....
(19) Notts County v Macclesfield ....
(20) Peterborough v Colchester ....
(21) Rochdale v Darlington ....
(22) Shrewsbury v Barnet ....

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Peterborough	10	6	3	1	24	9	21
Notts County	10	6	3	1	16	9	21
Exeter	10	6	3	1	14	8	21
Scunthorpe	10	6	1	3	10	8	19
Cambridge Utd	10	4	4	2	16	12	16
Chester	10	5	1	4	16	14	16
Macclesfield	10	4	4	2	14	8	16
Barnet	10	4	3	3	14	14	15
Colchester	10	4	3	3	14	14	15
Scarborough	10	4	3	3	13	12	15
Lincoln	10	4	3	3	10	11	15
Hartlepool	10	3	5	2	14	12	14
Torquay	10	4	2	4	14	14	14
Cardiff	10	3	5	2	12	12	14
L Orient	10	4	2	4	10	9	14
Rotherham	10	3	3	4	17	17	12
Rochdale	10	4	0	6	12	12	12
Mansfield	10	3	3	4	11	9	12
Shrewsbury	10	3	1	6	13	17	10
Swansea	10	3	1	6	13	20	10
Brighton	10	2	3	5	10	15	9
Darlington	10	1	5	4	9	12	8
Hull	10	1	2	7	11	21	5
Doncaster	10	0	3	7	5	22	3

Vauxhall Conference
(23) Farnborough v Morecambe ....
(—) Gateshead v Leek ....
(24) Hayes v Stalybridge ....
(25) Northwich v Hednesford ....
(26) Rushden and Diamonds v Hereford
(27) Southport v Kidderminster ....
(—) Stevenage v Woking ....

Bell's Scottish League
Third division
(—) Ross County v Queen's Park (1.0)

DR MARTENS LEAGUE: Premier division: Bath v Crawley (2.0); Cambridge City v *Atherstone*; Forest Green v Burton Albion; Gresley v Rothwell; Hastings v Merthyr; Tamworth v Ashford. Midland division: Bloxwich v Raunds T; Blakenall v Stafford; Brackley Town v Evesham; Moor Green v Wisbech Town; Paget R v Stafford; RC Warwick v Sutton Coldfield Town; Shepshed D v Grantham. Southern division: Fareham v Cinderford; Fleet T v Baldock; Newport AFC v Trowbridge; Newport IoW v Clevedon; Weston-super-Mare v Weymouth; Yate v Havant.

UNIBOND LEAGUE: Premier division: Altrincham v Colwyn Bay; Barrow v Frickley; Bishop Auckland v Accrington Stanley; Boston v Runcorn; Lancaster v Radcliffe; Spennymoor v Bamber Bridge. First division: Ashton United v Netherfield; Congleton v Farsley Celtic; Droylsden v Flixton; Eastwood Town v Albion; Great Harwood v Buxton; Stocksbridge PS v Bradford Pk Ave; Trafford v Harrogate Town; Whitby v Whitley Bay. League Cup: First-round replays: Alfreton v Matlock Town; Leigh v Workington.

ISTHMIAN LEAGUE: Premier division: Aylesbury v Boreham Wood; Bishop's Stortford v Harrow; Dulwich v Hendon; Oxford City v Hitchin; Purfleet v Gravesend and Northfleet; Walton and Hersham v Enfield; Chesham v Bromley. First division: Chertsey v Abingdon Town; Grays v Berkhamsted; Leatherhead v Maidenhead; Wembley v Worthing; *Whyteleafe v Aldershot Town*; Wokingham v Hampton. Second division: Bedford T v Windsor and Eton; Chalfont St Peter v Bracknell; Cheshunt v Hungerford; Egham v Northwood; Horsham v Witham; *Westlistone v Canvey Island*. Third division: Aveley v Ware; Corinthian-Casuals v Hertford; Croydon v Dorking; East Thurrock v *Kingsbury*; *Harlow v Ford Utd*; Hornchurch v H Hempstead; Lewes v Southall; Tring v Clapton.

PONTIN'S LEAGUE: Premier division: Liverpool v Leeds (2.0).

LEAGUE OF WALES: Aberystwyth v TNS (2.30); Bangor City v Rhayader Town (2.30); Barry v Porthmadog (2.30); Caernarfon v Inter Cable-Tel (2.30); Caersws v Rhyl (2.30); Carmarthen Town v Welshpool (2.30); Cemaes Ynys Mon v Newtown (2.30); Connah's Quay v Haverfordwest (2.30); Cwmbran v Flint Town (2.30); Ebbw Vale v Conwy (2.30).

SMIRNOFF IRISH LEAGUE: Premier division: Ballymena v Ards; Cliftonville v Portadown; Coleraine v Omagh; Crusaders v Glentoran; Glenavon v Linfield. First division: Ballyclare v Limavady Utd; Dungannon Swifts v Distillery; Larne v Bangor; Newry v Carrick.

FA CUP: Third qualifying round: Gainsborough v South Shields; Halifax v Ossett Town; Chorley v Ilkeston; Winsford v Arnold; Hyde v Rylands CA; Emley v Belper Town; N Ferriby v Gretna; Blyth Spartans v Worksop; Marine v Lincoln United; Guiseley v Penrith; Nuneaton v Stourbridge; Kettering v Hinckley Utd; Bromsgrove v Rocester; Knypersley V v Spalding; Halesowen Town v Redditch; King's Lynn v VS Rugby; Heytonbridge Swifts v Flackwell Heath; Bognor Regis v Croydon; Sittingbourne v Langney Sports; Sutton United v Tonbridge; Slough v Tilbury; Kingstonian v Wivenhoe; Braintree v Barton Rovers; Margate v Deal; Yeading v Romford; Carshalton v Fisher; Billericay v Erith and Belvedere; Cheltenham v Paulton R; Yeovil v Chippenham; Dorchester v Tiverton; Basingstoke v Calne; Salisbury v Taunton; Gloucester v Waterlooville.

ARNOTT INSURANCE NORTH LEAGUE: First division: Billingham Town v RTM Newcastle; Consett v Morpeth; Crook v Billingham; Durham v Shildon; Easington v Murton; Guisborough v Bedlington Terriers; Northallerton v Tow Law; Seaham Red Star v Dunston Federation; Stockton v Jarrow Roofing.

SOUTH EAST COUNTIES LEAGUE: First division: Charlton v Watford (11.0); Crystal Palace v Fulham (11.0); Gillingham v West Ham (11.0); Leyton Orient v Tottenham (11.0); Millwall v Ipswich (11.0); Portsmouth v Arsenal (11.0); Queens Park Rangers v Cambridge Utd (11.0); Southend v Norwich (11.0). Second division: Barnet v Bournemouth (11.0); Brentford v Reading (11.0); Brighton v Colchester (11.0); Oxford Utd v Bristol Rovers (11.0); Southampton v Luton (11.0); Swindon v Wycombe (11.0); Tottenham v Wimbledon (11.0).

PRESS & JOURNAL HIGHLAND LEAGUE: Cove v Brora; Deveronvale v Fraserburgh; Fort William v Keith.

TOMORROW

Nationwide League
First division
Birmingham v Wolverhampton (4.0) ....
Stoke v Port Vale (1.0) ....

FAI HARP LAGER NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Sligo v St Patrick's Ath; Bohemians v Drogheda (3.15); Finn Harps v Cork; UCD v Shelbourne (3.15).

FA CUP: Third qualifying round: Solihull v Woodbridge Town; St Leonards Stamcroft v Camberley Town.

FA WOMEN'S PREMIER LEAGUE: National division: Everton v Doncaster (at Marine FC, 1.0); Liverpool v Croydon (at Kirkby Sports Centre, 12.30); Millwall v Tranmere (at Fisher FC, 2.0); Wembley v Bradford (at Hanwell Town FC, 2.0).

FA WOMEN'S LEAGUE: Northern division: Aston Villa v Huddersfield; Bloxwich Town v Coventry; Blyth Spartans v Wolverhampton, Ilkeston v Arnold; Sheffield Wednesday v Garswood St Helens. Southern division: Ipswich v Southampton Saints; Rushden and Diamonds v Langford; Three Bridges v Brighton and Hove; Wimbledon v Leyton Orient.

BROADCASTING

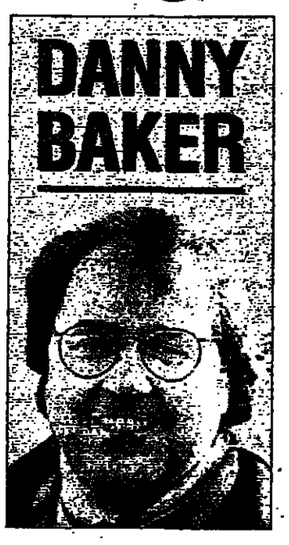
ENGLAND v ITALY: Today: Television: Sky Sports 2: Live coverage, from 6pm. ITV: 10.0pm-midnight. *Eurosport: Highlights, including all* the day's qualifying games and Canada v Mexico (live), from 7pm. *Radio: BBC Radio 5 Live:* Live coverage, from 7.30pm. Talk Radio: Live coverage, from 7.30pm.
SCOTLAND v LATVIA: Today: Channel 5: Live coverage, from 2.40pm.
OTHER FOOTBALL: Television: Today: BBC1: *Football Focus*, from 12.20pm. Tomorrow: Sky Sports 2: *Stoke v Port Vale and Birmingham v* Wolverhampton (both live), from 12pm. Radio: Tomorrow: *Sunday* Sport, from 1pm.

هكذا من الإصل

FOOTBALL SATURDAY

The playground that became a battleground

DANNY BAKER



I hereby announce the launch of this column's first write-in competition. It is to discover the most eccentric games master in the history of teaching. Naturally, after such a mechanical beginning, I'm about to plump up a cushion and rattle off my own pretty ripe entry but, rest assured, if my nomination is eventually declared the winner I shall be as shocked as anyone and will think long and hard about accepting the prize money (£50).

His name was Mr Geoghan and he taught at West Greenwich Boys Comprehensive in Deptford. While it is *de rigueur* in showbusiness to lay claim to an upbringing that included periods as a galley slave and Angolan Dog Of War you will just have to believe me — or perhaps ask a policeman — when I tell you West Greenwich was a rough house. It had a 60-40 white-black racial split, which I know in today's problem-free era of exciting British Airway logos it is impolite to notice, but it led to the most fabulous playground bundles. (The Playground Bundle being an irresistible mobile scrap of the kind that splendidly still breaks out in any masculine team game when players lose patience with the actual fixture, pull off the false beard of formal rules and give us a whiff of the amphitheatre.)

Quite simply, at certain playtimes, all the white kids would line up at one end of the playground and all the black kids at the other. Then we would charge each other and, basically, make the whole Poll Tax turnout in Trafalgar Square look like very small beer indeed. This was no depressing evidence of urban racial tension, although if we had been told by several men in beards that it *was* we would have bought into it and then carried on charging at each other, but this time with an excuse. No, it was a great game. A terrifically exhilarating exercise in which the only object was to get to the other side of the yard and hopefully land a juicy one en route.

So, into this testosterone broth comes Mr Geoghan. Mr Geoghan is short, athletic and speaks in a broad American accent, and indeed, as it turns out, has only been back from 'Nam about eight months. He was Henry Winkler's Fonz out of Bruce Lee. Now with his new English bride, a sociology teacher, he's taken up teaching PE in Deptford and is not fazed one little bit. Mr Geoghan sets about sorting out the kids with all the skills the Marine Corps have issued him with in order to bring Charlie to heel.

For one whole year he's pushing, shoving, elbowing and once, very memorably grabbing John Howe and, I swear, after singing the line "For he's the leader of the pack!" "revving" the side of Howesy's head like a Harley-Davidson. Here, at last, was one of *us*. Mr Geoghan doesn't know about football but joins in all our games, wrecking them and laughing like a loon. He once told me that not only would I captain England but that they would redesign the ball to look like my face. (In fact quite the reverse came to pass.) He famously announced that cricket was a "fag's pastime" — a secret, unexpressed thought within us all surely — and instead of playing the last eight overs sometimes we would all get in a circle and see who could hold their breath the longest. Those who cheated or went less than 30 seconds had to run round the circle until they fell over.

One day, he asked a bunch of us in the changing rooms to explain the previous day's "bundle" for which about half the school were doing detention that night. We did and, eyes twinkling, he pronounced it the first serious sporting event he'd encountered since arriving on this dreary island. Far from seconding the headmaster's call for a total ban, he told us that, while appreciating the spontaneous nature of the event, if he could be given some kind of notice of the next bout he would be happy to act as referee, coach and even disciplinarian to those judged not pulling their weight.

Warming to the theme, he next suggested shifting the match to the gravel pitch behind a local warehouse. The upshot was there was never another bundle at West Greenwich. I genuinely don't think that was the intention but, alas, in sanctioning the madness, the fix was in. (Americans were later to do much the same with Punk Rock.) He could often be found surreptitiously asking about the prospect of a little action but the whole thing had become an embarrassment, somehow childish. The playground became merely a place to gossip and gamble.

Mr Geoghan left after one full school year and we never heard of him again. In telling his story I don't want you to be left with the impression of some gung-ho hero of ours or even that we became deeper, more rounded young proles because of being Punched By An Angel. We didn't. But it's a matter of cold hard fact that we did not lose a single football match — league or cup — all that year. (We were regularly routed at cricket, though.) No, Mr G was just another one of the dozens of sports teachers who drifted through our comprehensive, memorable only because he was so potty. And because other people have met games masters pottier. So let's make it a round hundred.

Pull your socks up, sunshine: another exhausted Premiership player

Yeah, tired excuse

THIS is a tricky one. I want to tell football players to stop complaining about being tired all the time without coming across as one of the "pull-your-socks-up-you-should-try-working-for-a-living" sort. But the fact is they really should pull their socks up and try working for a living. I know nothing about that, of course, but I know people who do, and when *they* say they're tired they're *usually bleeding and covered in* roofing asphalt. To relax they play football. Then again, it's not usually the players themselves who do the whining about "tired". It's managers. More specifically managers who have just been knocked out of cups. But like that other specious soccer science "technique", "fixture congestion" seems to have become another empty piece of touchline bullshit that buzzes about in post-match interviews. It may be an obvious swipe but I hope when managers call the fire brigade they get told they can't come around to the fire because the lads have just come back from one — give us 20 minutes there's a love?

More importantly ... it's not important. So clubs get knocked out of competitions, so what? You're breaking my heart with the four times in ten days. You had a go at it, you failed — big deal. Be big. If you truly are worried about giving the public less than 100 per cent entertainment then you've forgotten that most people love to see Arsenal, United, Chelsea, etc get caned whatever the reason, so who cares if you couldn't Do Your Best Baden-Powell?

As for England tonight I don't think the week off makes the slightest bit of difference. It is no guarantee of anything. If we really *wanted to unnerve the Italians we* would have come up with a new domestic competition just for this week that ended on Friday night. Failing that, I recommend England don't turn up for the game until about three minutes before kick-off and then arrive noisily giving each other piggy-backs — anyone who's played Sunday League knows what a freak-out that is. But our current obsession with letting the world know how tired actually playing the damn game makes our athletes can only encourage the Italians to wear huge alarm clocks around their necks in the manner of Public Enemy's Flavour Flav and distract our defence at corners with exaggerated theatrical yawns.

Besides, the merest glance at the Rolling Stones' punishing tour dates should bring a blush to every manager's cheek in the Premiership.

Why I like Italy (1)

IT'S no good. We simply can't hate Italy. There are certain eternal enemies but the Eyeties aren't one of them. If tonight's match were in Germany then I suspect the entire populace might've been given the week off like top players are these days before they have to put together a couple of passes.

Italy are cool. I remember being in Italy the day after they'd gone out of the '90 World Cup to snivelling Argentina and I've never seen a people so thunderstruck. Each and every piazza was covered in prostrate moaning bodies like the famous Confederate wounded scene in *Gone With The Wind*. There were no buses, no mail was being delivered and all official buildings remained shut.

I sat in a hotel bar in Turin and fell in with some locals who refused to let me buy a single round. Eventually the maudlin songs we all sang and the rivers of wine-supported tears made it clear that, as gloriously vanquished nations, we were brothers and all they had was mine.

When I told them that, in fact, England and Germany hadn't even kicked off yet and England were still IN the World Cup, they told me to sit back down and stop living in a fantasy land. "You are England. Like Italy you are not Germany or Argentina. We cannot be these nations. Our theatres have tragedy. Our football has the beauty of different possibilities ..."

A few hours later we gathered again to sing even sadder songs.

So tonight as Gascoigne and Ince add goals four and five to England's total there will be a part of me owning up that, yes, "there but for the grace of God" and, as a mark of respect, I shall leave at least one bottle of Barolo breathing untouched on the sideboard. For, long shot though it is, there may later come a gentle tap at my front door along with the sounds of soft sobs and mandolins. Senori, I still owe you one ...

IF, BY chance, David Mellor should knock on your door seeking a signature for his ingratiating petition to bring back terracing to football stadiums, I hope you will take off his glasses and put them down a convenient drain. Really, the gall of the body behind this insulting idea is breathtaking. When the Taylor Report was all the rage and every running-scared directors'-box dweller in the country was scurrying about demanding football supporters pay some kind of price for Hillsborough — and if ever there was a piece of middle-class spite against working-class supporters that report was it — those who voiced the opinion that fans actually liked terracing were denounced and patronised.

Now, because Manchester United or Liverpool or somesuch supermarket have wondered aloud if they might not cram a few extra shekels out of existing space by removing some seats and employing gangs of those "pushers" so popular on Tokyo tube trains, all of a sudden the greasy chins around Lancaster Gate suddenly see the beauty of such a scheme. And naturally they've dressed it up as "responding" to a genuine request from the rank and file.

Why I like Italy (2)

ON ENTERING Turin's ground to watch the World Cup semi-final England v Germany, an Italian policeman searched both myself and my bags and took the following action. He removed my little Union Jack from the small candy-floss style stick it was on, put the flag in a large sack and gave me back the stick. After walking on a few paces I was tapped on the shoulder by the same policeman, now very flustered, joined by somebody I guessed to be his immediate superior. The superior looked very steamed. The policeman handed me back the flag but requested he have the stick. Apparently that was the way they'd been told to do it and the poor bloke had plainly not been listening. I was not his first customer either. His sack was full of flags and, presumably, inside the ground, supporters were leaning over and poking people several blocks away with long poles. This sort of thing does not happen in Berlin.

☐ Danny Baker is on Talk Radio (1053-1089am) every Saturday from 5.30pm.

Scotland mindful of their task

By Kevin McCarra

IMAGINATION may be prized on the field, but before a match begins it is only a source of torment. The Scotland players realise that they need only to defeat Latvia at Celtic Park this afternoon to *make virtually certain of a* place in the World Cup finals. Anxiety, however, finds its way of seeping through the chinks in that simple assertion and the team can envisage a horrible disappointment.

Even if Scotland do win this afternoon, they are liable to be second in group four, behind Austria. Automatic qualification for the finals is open only to the best of the runners-up in Europe.

Craig Brown's team should enjoy that status, but they would be supplanted if Spain were outlandishly feckless enough to lose at home to the Faeroe Isles.

Such an outcome is so far-fetched as to be discounted by dispassionate analysts, but, in Scotland, emotions, and dread, are at work. The 50,000 people at Celtic Park are as ready to writhe with anxiety as they are to celebrate. For the players, at least, there will be an escape route from the circumstances of the qualification process.

Getting the better of Latvia should take up all of their available concentration. Brown, the manager, will barely discuss the possibility of a triumph for the Faeroes' part-timers in Gijón this evening. "We'd be looking for a stewards' inquiry if that happened," he said succinctly. Brown is more concerned that his side should bring a familiar performance to an unusual occasion.

So far, the team has won all four of its group matches at home in group four and, incongruous though it may seem, Scotland are establishing a reputation for reliability. There is no apparent reason for the pattern to be disrupted against Latvia because Brown seems to have a fully-fit squad now that doubts over the fitness of Kevin Gallacher have diminished.

"Every player in my starting line-up has been in outstanding form recently," the manager said. "There have been rave reviews for Craig Burley. John Collins has been captaining Monaco. Gary McAllister has been at his best for Coventry City."

The unsolicited testimonials are unusual, given that Brown has a horror of the vainglorious trait that lies in the Scottish character.

His purpose is to remind the team that it is asked only to live up to standards it has already set.

"I take optimism from our last match, when we beat Belarus 4-1," Brown said. "Against Latvia, I want us to take the initiative and keep the game at a high pace. We have highly experienced players who know they can't afford any lapses in concentration.

"When Estonia came to Scotland we didn't expect them to come out of defence. Belarus got a penalty at Pittodrie, but they probably only had one other chance. Latvia are better than either of those teams and they like to play, even when they are away from home. In Vladimir Babicevs, they have a very creative footballer."

The Scotland players who have performed valiantly in group four know, however, that the most formidable adversaries to be encountered today are the fears and inhibitions that lurk inside their own minds.

SCOTLAND (probable; 3-5-2): J Leighton (Aberdeen) — C Hendry (Blackburn Rovers), C Daily (Derby County), C Calderwood (Tottenham Hotspur) — C Burley (Celtic), G McAllister (Coventry City), P Lambert (Borussia Dortmund), J Collins (AS Monaco), T Boyd (Celtic) — G Durie (Rangers), K Gallacher (Blackburn Rovers).

LATVIA (probable, 3-5-2): O Karavajevs (Zwickau) — I Troickis (CSK Kristall), I Stepanovs (Skonto), V Lobanovs (Metalburg) — I Braidelis (Skonto), M Zemlinskis (Skonto), V Bebkovs (Skonto), O Blagonadezdins (Skonto), S Ivanovs (Daugava) — V Rimkus (Engehurge), M Pahars (Skonto)

Referee: S Piller (Hungary)

GROUP FOUR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Austria	9	7	1	1	13	4	22
Scotland	9	6	2	1	13	3	20
Sweden	9	6	0	3	15	9	18
Latvia	9	3	1	5	10	12	10
Belarus	9	1	1	7	5	17	4
Estonia	9	1	1	7	4	15	4

RESULTS: Sweden 5 Belarus 1; Austria 0 Scotland 0; Belarus 1 Estonia 0; Latvia 1 Sweden 2; Latvia 0 Scotland 2, Estonia 1 Belarus 0; Belarus 1 Latvia 1; Sweden 0 Austria 1, Austria 2 Latvia 1, Scotland 1 Sweden 0; Estonia 0 Scotland 0 (in Monaco), Scotland 2 Estonia 0; Scotland 2 Austria 0; Latvia 2 Belarus 0; Sweden 2 Scotland 1; Austria 2 Estonia 0; Estonia 1 Latvia 3; Belarus 0 Scotland 1; Latvia 1 Austria 3; Estonia 2 Sweden 3; Estonia 0 Austria 3; Belarus 1 Sweden 2; Austria 1 Sweden 0; Latvia 1 Estonia 0; Scotland 4 Belarus 1; Belarus 0 Austria 1; Sweden 1 Latvia 0.

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Austria v Belarus; Sweden v Estonia; Scotland v Latvia.

Keane is resigned to missing finals

From Russell Kempson in Dublin

IRELAND'S World Cup qualifying match against Romania at Lansdowne Road this afternoon is little more than an irrelevance. Romania, the unbeaten leaders of group eight, have already reached the finals in France next year and Ireland, unless there is a huge turnaround in their goal difference with Lithuania, have secured the runners-up spot and a place in the play-offs.

Of more significance in the city yesterday was the appearance of Roy Keane, the Ireland and Manchester United midfield player. Keane tore the cruciate ligament in his right knee in the FA Carling Premiership game against Leeds United a fortnight ago and has conceded that not only is his season over, but also that he is unlikely to play for Ireland should they go to France.

"Setting yourself targets can be a bit dangerous, but, realistically, I'm aiming to be back for pre-season training," he said. "I suppose if Ireland qualify for the finals, I could be there. It's the pinnacle for any player and you never say never. Yet to go straight into them without any games behind me would be tough."

Keane has undergone preliminary surgery and will have an operation to repair the ligament within the next ten days. "I've already seen a video of what happens so I've got a fair idea what they're going to do," he said. "I think the more you know about injuries, the better. I'll be an expert on cruciate ligaments by the time I'm back."

Mick McCarthy, the Ireland manager, will field a barely recognisable side against Romania. Nine members of his squad are on one yellow card and he does not want to risk losing them for the play-offs. Ray Houghton is captain for the first time and Lee Carsley is likely to make his debut.

IRELAND (probable): A Kelly (Sheffield United), S Carr (Tottenham Hotspur), G Breen (Coventry City), P Babb (Liverpool), C Fleming (Middlesbrough), A McLoughlin (Portsmouth), R Houghton (Reading), J McAteer (Liverpool), L Carsley (Derby County), A Cascarino (Nancy), T Coyne (Motherwell).

ROMANIA (probable): B Stelea (Salamanca), D Petrescu (Chelsea), Gabriel Popescu (Universitatea Craiova), A Dobos (AEK Athens), I Filipescu (Galatasaray), Gheorghe Popescu (Galatasaray), D Munteanu (FC Cologne), A Ilie (Galatasaray), V Moldoveanu (Grasshopper), G Hagi (Galatasaray), T Selymes (Anderlecht).

Referee: N Levnikov (Russia)

GROUP EIGHT

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Romania	9	9	0	0	36	3	27
Ireland	9	5	2	2	21	7	17
Lithuania	9	4	2	3	9	7	14
Macedonia	9	4	1	4	21	16	13
Iceland	9	1	3	5	7	16	6
Liechtenstein	9	0	0	9	3	48	0

RESULTS: Macedonia 3 Liechtenstein 0; Iceland 1 Macedonia 1, Liechtenstein 0 Ireland 5; Romania 3 Lithuania 0, Lithuania 2 Iceland 0; Iceland 0 Romania 4; Ireland 3 Macedonia 0; Lithuania 2 Liechtenstein 1; Liechtenstein 1 Macedonia 11, Ireland 0 Iceland 0; Macedonia 0 Romania 3; Romania 8 Liechtenstein 0; Macedonia 3 Ireland 2; Lithuania 0 Romania 1; Romania 1 Ireland 0; Liechtenstein 0 Lithuania 2; Ireland 5 Liechtenstein 0; Macedonia 1 Iceland 0; Iceland 0 Lithuania 0; Ireland 0 Lithuania 0; Liechtenstein 0 Iceland 4; Romania 4 Macedonia 2; Iceland 2 Ireland 4; Liechtenstein 1 Romania 8; Lithuania 2 Macedonia 0; Romania 4 Iceland 0; Lithuania 1 Ireland 2

MATCHES TO COME: Today: Iceland v Liechtenstein; Ireland v Romania; Macedonia v Lithuania.

Radio Mellor makes its mark at Barnsley. **Mark Hodkinson** reports

Accent that resonates at Oakwell

Bottles of mineral water stand on the top table and there is a pen and a notebook in front of each of the five seats. A huge Radio 5 Live banner is draped across the concrete breeze-blocks painted a job-lot magnolia.

David Mellor strides into the room, past microphone stands and football supporters in their team colours. Players in the red of Barnsley stare down from team photographs on the wall. The squad of 1978-79 look like an anthropological exhibit of an ancient race of footballers: all loose-ring perms, wiry moustaches and skinny, boyish bodies. The last time Mellor was in Barnsley, he was prowling the town centre, looking for old ladies willing to offer a hand to shake, or young mothers with babies to fuss over. Where he once solicited votes for the Conservative Party, he now seeks the voice of the authentic football supporter. "Come on, have your say," he implores, and the airwaves *are* yours — if there is enough time between his next discourse and the 8 o'clock news.

While the executive suite at Oakwell hosts this latest "football forum", there is a hullabaloo taking place in another northern town, a 90-minute drive to the west. Ffion Jenkins, fiancée of William Hague, the Leader of the Opposition, has taken the conservative out of Conservatism with the help of an immodest black dress at the party's annual conference. So, Blackpool is on fire, awash with flashlights, drunk on the romance of renaissance.

Mellor, the nation's ultimate renaissance man, is missing the festivities because he is in Barnsley, in cuff-links.

A football forum is an itinerant talking-shop where Mellor gets to play shopkeeper. A smart shopkeeper he is too, in an outfit he might well proffer as a potential Chelsea strip: blue shirt with pin-stripes, white collar and cuffs, and, of course, glittering cuff-links. Alongside him is a quietly charismatic panel rich in football acumen: Danny Wilson, the Barnsley manager; Chris Kamara, the Bradford City manager; Steve Nicol, the Sheffield Wednesday defender; and Mark Lawrenson, the former professional turned pundit. The audience has been selected judiciously. They are polite, informed, attentive, the kind of people who know that the plural of stadium is stadia.

LIFE AT THE TOP

BARNSLEY FOOTBALL CLUB

They have submitted questions beforehand and these have been typed out by someone at the radio station, so they can be read aloud when a microphone is swung over their head. The clapping at the start is ominously reminiscent of *Gardener's Question Time*.

Wilson, as host, is the focus of the early queries. He's not born to the spotlight, and it finds him reluctantly. He says "in all honesty" and "at this moment in time" rather a lot, but between the clichés there are words of sincerity and assurance. In answer to the question, at this moment in time he does not know, in all honesty, whether Barnsley are equipped to survive in the FA Carling Premiership.

JUSTIN SLEE / GUZELIAN

Itinerant talking shop: from left, Wilson, Mellor and Nicol at the radio debate in Barnsley's executive suite

Lawrenson plays the comic and his irreverence is a necessary foil to Mellor's pontificating. The panel members are remarkably acquiescent to their chairman, their demeanour suggesting that they feel like schoolboys in the presence of the headmaster. He knows more words than they do, has a posh accent, and whereas they are apprehensive of the microphone, he adores it.

The issues discussed are typical fare: referees, a proposed mid-winter break, stewarding, a return to terraces, and racism in the game.

Mellor mistakenly asks someone at the back to speak and a lady with a clipboard waves her arms and shakes her head. He follows her command, but, behind her back, gives a seething look that would make Dennis Bergkamp mis-hit in front of an open goal.

Mellor, to his credit, is not without a sense of humour, though the best one-liner of the evening belongs to Lawrenson, with a creditable assist from Wilson. Ian O'Brien, of Wakefield, asks whether footballers are fair to their fans, citing a recent visit to the Liverpool training ground where he saw a player drive through a group of children waiting for his autograph.

"At Barnsley we chase after the kids and make them have our autographs," Wilson says. "That's if you can catch them," Lawrenson adds.

John Dennis, the Barnsley chairman, is spotted in the corridor afterwards, looking distinctly proud that Barnsley has been visited by a national radio station.

Perhaps next time, if Mellor is to turn from peach white to magnolia, the forum should be held in Barnsley market or at one of the town's working men's clubs; and no one gets to see the questions first.

هكذا من الأصل

TENNIS: BRITAIN NO 1 GETS FOURTH CHANCE FOR FIRST VICTORY IN SEMI-FINAL SHOWDOWN TODAY

Henman's run under threat from Rusedski

FROM JULIAN MUSCAT, TENNIS CORRESPONDENT IN VIENNA

THE showdown sought by every British tennis fan became reality here yesterday when Greg Rusedski and Tim Henman dispatched their respective opponents for the right to meet each other in the semi-finals of the CA Trophy. Added spice seasons the contest by the fact that Rusedski has not beaten Henman in three previous encounters.

The world ranking system decrees that Rusedski should start favourite. His recent string of successes has swept him clear of Henman as the Britain No 1, but any argument surrounding their relative merits can only be resolved out on court. The two have not met for nearly 12 months, when Henman won 7-6, 7-5 in Ostrava. If the momentum is now with Rusedski, so impressive was Henman in victory yesterday that only a fool would dare to predict the outcome today.

Rusedski kept his guard firmly up when asked to assess the contest. To the disbelief of his audience, he insisted: "It is just another match. I will play whoever is in my way before Hannover. On the day, it will just be down to who is the better player." Asked about his previous encounters with Henman, Rusedski said: "Records are there to be broken."

So, can Henman derail the Rusedski Express? "He is playing the best tennis of his career but I do feel confident," Henman said. "I have a good record against him. He definitely goes into the match as favourite. There is pressure and expectation on him.

"Beating him three times has given me a belief, a confidence that my game is up against his. I'll have to accept that he'll serve several aces, which makes it extra important that I concentrate on winning my own serve."

Rusedski almost ruined the script when he wavered badly in his war of attrition with Todd Martin, of the United States. A close match seemed unlikely given the way Rusedski opened against an opponent he had never beaten in four previous encounters.

If Martin, like an executioner, came clad in the all-black, it was Rusedski who tightened the noose, breaking the American with a stinging service return to establish a 2-0 lead. Three aces in the next game consolidated his advantage.

A tense second set seemed destined for a tie-break, although both players had their chances. Rusedski was obliged to fend off a break point, his first in this tournament, when 3-4 down, but he tamely netted an attempted backhand pass on the sole break point he conjured.

Then, in the tie-break, Rusedski's world fell apart as nerves betrayed him. He lost four consecutive points and his frustration was evident when he hurled his racket across the court.

Rusedski wobbled badly in the opening game of the third set, gifting Martin two double-faults before pulling through. Suddenly, Martin threatened the once-impregnable Rusedski service at will.

However, with Rusedski surviving by his fingertips, Martin positively gifted him some breathing space with two double faults in game four. Rusedski needed no second invite. He served out to prevail 6-1, 6-7, 6-3.

Henman, for his part, played an outstanding match to defeat Karol Kucera for the loss of just five games, in the process replicating his victory over the same opponent in Basle last week. It was a near-flawless performance from the Britain No 2, who dominated the gifted Slovakian from the opening exchanges. It is easy to understand why so many contemporaries pay homage to Henman's talent when he plays like this.

Once again, Henman failed to hit a satisfactory quota of first services — he registered 35 per cent against Kucera's 60. But that detail, together with the careless break he conceded late in the opening set, should not cloud a classy performance. Kucera is dangerous when allowed to run loose but Henman, rather than snaffle his opponent, simply outshone him with a succession of winners.

It is little wonder that audiences around Europe love to watch Henman play. His powerful groundstrokes contrasted vividly with his delicate touch at the net; one backhand stop-volley from a full-blooded Kucera drive was the stuff of fantasy. On this sort of showing, Henman's world ranking of No 21 is insulting to his talents.

The conundrum he must confront remains his inability to play back-to-back matches of this calibre. Nevertheless, Rusedski will be mindful that his rival has hit form at exactly the right time.

DETAILS

RESULTS: Second round: G Rusedski (GB) bt M Norman (Swe) 6-4, 6-2; K Kucera (Slovakia) bt T Haas (Ger) 6-1, 6-3; G Ivanisevic (Cro) bt C Woodruff (US) 6-4, 7-6. Quarter-finals: T Henman (GB) bt Kucera 6-3, 6-1; Ivanisevic bt B Ulihrach (Cz) 7-6, 3-6, 6-3; Rusedski bt T Martin (US) 6-1, 6-7, 6-3. SEMI-FINAL DRAW: Rusedski v Henman; Ivanisevic v M Larsson (Swe) or R Krajicek (Holl).
TELEVISION: Today: Eurosport from 1pm

Henman stretches to serve on his way to a comfortable victory in two sets over Kucera in Vienna yesterday

Hingis eyes revenge chance

MARTINA HINGIS, the world No 1, beat Manuela Maleeva, of Bulgaria, in straight sets in Filderstadt, Germany, yesterday to reach the semi-finals of the Porsche Cup. There, she will have the chance to avenge a recent defeat by Amanda Coetzer.

The South African beat Hingis in the semi-finals in Leipzig last week, only Hingis's third defeat of the year. "I'm really motivated for this match — I'd be really upset to lose twice in a row to the same player," Hingis said, after beating Maleeva 6-2, 6-3.

Coetzer, the No 5 seed, beat another Swiss teenager, Patty Schnyder, 6-2, 7-5, to earn her place in the last four. Schnyder, an 18-year-old left-hander, needed treatment for a muscle cramp in her left shoulder when trailing 4-3 in the second set.

When she returned after a three-minute break, Schnyder dropped her service but Coetzer, serving for the match, wasted her opportunity and Schnyder levelled at 5-5. Coetzer then saved two break points in the next game and benefited from a series of errors by Schnyder to clinch victory.

In the other quarter-finals, Irina Spirlea, the No 8 seed, beat Arantxa Sánchez Vicario 7-5, 6-4 and will next meet Lisa Raymond, who ousted Naoko Sawamatsu 6-2, 6-3.

☐ Nicolas Kiefer, of Germany, toppled the second seed, Marcelo Rios, of Chile, 6-1, 7-5 in the quarter-finals of the Heineken Open in Singapore yesterday and joins three Swedes, Thomas Johansson, Magnus Gustafsson and Mikael Tillstrom, in the last four. Kiefer plays Tillstrom.

BOXING

Hamed to give better value than Eubank

BY SRIKUMAR SEN, BOXING CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S two showmen, Naseem Hamed and Chris Eubank, compete for the attention of the full house of 13,000 at Sheffield Arena tonight.

Hamed's performance should prove more popular. His choreographed grand entrance is more meaningful than Eubank's because when the cheering has stopped the Sheffield featherweight gives full value in the ring. Eubank, on the other hand, favours flexitime, working only a minute or so of every round, preferring posing to throwing punches.

Even at crucial moments he has held back. When he knocked Steve Collins to the canvas in the tenth round of their first encounter, instead of following up he simply stood back to admire his work, allowing Collins to recover and win on points. It should be no different tonight when Eubank faces Joe Calzaghe for the vacant World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight title.

Of the two bouts, Eubank has the tougher one. His contest will appeal more to the boxing fans because they want to see if Calzaghe really is as good as he claims to be. The 25-year-old Welshman is unbeaten in 22 contests.

It is hard to see what Eubank can do against Calzaghe. The Brighton man used to have trouble making the weight three years ago when he was boxing as a super-middleweight. How much more must he be struggling to make 12 stone now that he is a light-heavyweight. He will have to shed at least a stone, if not a stone and a half. He will be drained at the weight which could mean more posing and less boxing than ever.

It should not be difficult for Calzaghe, who is quick on his feet and has fast hands, to dart in and out, piling up the points round by round. However, if by some miracle, Eubank can put up a proper fight it will be surprising if Calzaghe can stand up to his blows.

Eubank, who called off a meeting on Wednesday with Calzaghe, as he was pressing the button for the National Lottery, did not turn up yesterday either. This time it was because his helicopter was held up. So long as Eubank shows up tonight, Calzaghe was not too bothered.

He said: "I think he will fight a cagey fight, biding his time and doing some posing. He may pose, but I will be pressing him for every minute of every round. When I catch him properly he will go — definitely."

Hamed's bout against Jose Badillo, of Puerto Rico, is unlikely to last more than three rounds but will be greatly appreciated by his followers. Badillo arrived only on Wednesday from California as a late replacement for Victor Llereno.

Frank Warren, the promoter, wanted quality opposition for Hamed and as he was unable to sign a world champion, he could do no better than bring in the No 1 WBO contender. But one has to be cautious of the WBO's rankings. No 1 contenders have a habit of appearing and disappearing without warning, like ash dropping off a promoter's cigar. For instance, Calzaghe moved to the No 1 mandatory position overnight.

Badillo is not ranked in the first 30 of the World Boxing Council. All the same, he does have the distinction of putting Tom Johnson on the floor twice. "He was very unlucky to lose to Johnson," Warren said. Johnson was stopped by Hamed in eight rounds.

Hamed: grand entrance

Hamed said: "Badillo is one of the best I have met. To do what he did two years ago to Johnson, he was better than when I fought him, but I will stop him in three rounds."

But the challenger, sporting a black eye which his manager claimed to be a birthmark, is quietly confident of surprising everybody. He said: "I'm not intimidated by him. He is human like any other boxer. He's not anything from another world. I've seen him knock out many fighters, but he has never fought anyone with my style and strength.

"So he is not going to be able to have his way with me. I saw the fight with Daniel Alicea — Alicea could not finish the job [after flooring Hamed early], because of his inexperience. It will be different with me. I have never been on the floor."

Badillo is in for a new experience tonight.

THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

An evening with Kevin Keegan

TIMES readers are invited to a *Times*/Dillons forum on Thursday October 16 in London with Kevin Keegan, the former manager of Newcastle United. Keegan, who was also an England international footballer, will be the star speaker on a panel which will include Oliver Holt, football correspondent of *The Times*. Among the topics for discussion are details of Keegan's sudden departure from Newcastle last season, his views on modern management, his return to football with Fulham and England's World Cup prospects.

The forum marks the publication of Keegan's *My Autobiography* (Little Brown £16.99) and will be held at Westminster Central Hall, Storey's Gate, London SW1 at 7.30pm. Admission price is £10 (concessions £7.50) and includes £2 off the price of the book. There will also be an opportunity for the audience to put questions to him.

THE TIMES/DILLONS FORUM

Please send me ..... ticket(s) at £10 each (£7.50 concessions) for The Times/Dillons Forum with Kevin Keegan at 7.30pm on Thursday, October 16, at Westminster Central Hall, London SW1.

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FOOTBALL

McGhee reaches turning point

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

MARK McGHEE, the Wolverhampton Wanderers manager, said yesterday that he felt under pressure as he prepared his side for the Nationwide League first division derby with Birmingham City at St Andrew's tomorrow. McGhee believes that the visits to Birmingham and then to his former club, Reading, which follows in midweek, present "watersheds" in Wolves' season, not simply for his team but for himself.

Although McGhee is under no immediate threat regarding his own future, with Sir Jack Hayward, the club's chairman and multimillionaire backer, sympathetic to the injury list that has hampered the team's progress so far this season, he knows that defeats would leave his team in the lower half — the wrong half — of the table.

"In practical terms, I don't think it will be the end of the world in terms of our eventual hopes for this season if we weren't to win the next two games," he said. "However, the reality of the situation is that not everybody will perceive it that way. I know my squad and I am convinced they will come through for me and do the business once we get enough people back from injury, but not everyone will view it like that — and with every bad result you get, the pressure builds. On Sunday morning, we could be something like seventeenth, but after playing, we could be around seventh if we get the three points.

"The next couple of games are watersheds. If things work out, we could possibly go back to Molineux next weekend [for the match against Swindon Town] in the top six or seven, maybe only two or three points off the top three. If things don't work out, then we could return there under the sort of pressure that people are talking about.

"We don't expect to be at the top of the league with the problems we've had, but we do expect to be hanging on to the coat-tails of those who are. Three points at Birmingham would achieve that."

Wolves have signed Paul Simpson, the Derby County winger, on a month's loan with a view to the signing becoming permanent. Simpson, 31, is valued at around £75,000.

Paul Peschisolido has rejected the offer of an improved contract from West Bromwich Albion. Peschisolido, 26, had said earlier in the week that he was "very close" to signing a two-year extension to his current deal, which has 18 months to run.

Scotland Under-21 slipped to an embarrassing defeat by Latvia Under-21 at Livingstone yesterday, losing 4-2 despite the Latvians having their goalkeeper, Aleksanders Kolinko, dismissed in the first half for a head butt. Iain Anderson, of Dundee, and David Graham, of Rangers, scored the Scots' goals. The game proved to be traumatic for David Mathieson, 19, the Queen of the South goalkeeper, who was at fault for each of the visitors' goals.

RUGBY LEAGUE: VICE-CAPTAIN'S INJURY ADDS TO BRITAIN'S CASUALTY LIST

Betts to miss Australia series

Brisbane Broncos 22
Auckland Warriors 16

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

WHEN the injury crisis facing Great Britain looked like it could not get much worse, Denis Betts, the vice captain, yesterday tore a shoulder muscle on his last appearance for Auckland Warriors and was added to the absentee list for the British Gas series against Australia in three weeks.

After the losses of Shaun Edwards, Tony Smith and Francis Cummins, and the probable absence of Gary Connolly and Jason Robinson, Britain have now been denied their most experienced forward. As he requires surgery, Betts could miss the start of next season back at Wigan, and he might be out for six months.

Betts lasted 30 minutes after he fell awkwardly in an early high challenge by Andrew Gee, the Brisbane prop, in Auckland's world club championship semi-final defeat at ANZ Stadium. "It was a knock on the shoulder and it seemed to get gradually worse," Betts said.

Betts had been an integral part of Andy Goodway's plans. The Britain coach will be less inclined to switch Andy Farrell from the back row, which he was considering in an attempt to resolve difficulties at half back. Should the Australian Rugby League deny the appeal for Connolly and Robinson to be freed from their contractual obligations, British misery will be just about complete.

Betts: tore shoulder muscle

Joe Lydon, the Rugby Football League technical director, said: "The series was always going to be a challenge and the loss of Denis makes it an even bigger one. But these are the fortunes of rugby league and, with Denis out, another player could easily make his mark."

Betts, at 28 the elder statesman of the side, was poised to overtake Cliff Watson's record of 30 appearances as a forward for Britain, at Wembley on November 1.

In a tempestuous, but thrilling encounter, Brisbane lived on their nerve ends to reach the world championship final at Auckland next Friday, after they had trailed by 16-10. After a try-saving tackle by Hancock on Endacott, Brisbane responded with tries by Kevin Walters and Ben Walker, the former London Broncos scrum half, who had opened Brisbane's account with a visionary ch'p and chase, to underline their overall superiority.

It has set up a possible rematch of the Australasian Super League grand final, which Brisbane won, should Cronulla Sharks beat Hunter Mariners in the second semi-final today.

SCORERS: Brisbane Broncos: Tries: Walker (2), Tallis, Walters. Goals: Walker (3). Auckland Warriors: Tries: Cudemyn (2), Endacott. Goals: Ridge (2).

BRISBANE BRONCOS: D Lockyer; M Deverey, D Smith, S Renouf, W Sailor; K Walters, B Walker; S Wubcke, J Plath, A Gee, B Thorn, G Tallis, P Ryan. Substitutes: M Hancock, T Carroll, P Lee, P Cayprowa.

AUCKLAND WARRIORS: M Ridge; S Hoppe, A Swann, S Endacott, L Cudemyn; G Ngamu, S Jones; B Malam, S Eru, J Vagana, S Kearney, D Betts, L Swann. Substitutes: M Ellis, D Bailey, A Guttenbeil, A Tuimavave.

Referee: G Annesley (Sydney)

Bell steps down to focus on youth

BY CHRISTOPHER IRVINE

GARY HETHERINGTON, the chief executive of Leeds Rhinos, raised various names yesterday as a possible successor to Dean Bell who announced that he was stepping down as head coach after two years and taking up a new post as head of youth development at the club.

Hetherington recently met Graham Murray, the coach of Hunter Mariners, who are expected to be disbanded when a compromise is reached between the Australasian Super League and the Australian Rugby League (ARL).

Murray is the favourite for the job, but Hetherington, intriguingly, produced a piece of paper with 13 other names on it. He said there was no urgency to make an appointment and that he was open to suggestions, even to the point of pitching in Ellery Hanley's name.

Two other former Great Britain coaches, Phil Larder and Malcolm Reilly, who had a brief spell in charge at Leeds in the late Eighties, were mentioned, but the compensation that Newcastle Knights, the ARL champions, would demand for Reilly is likely to be too high.

Hetherington said that whoever was appointed by Christmas would have "the best job in the world". It has often been a poisoned chalice. Bell, who grew into the position after a difficult first season, was offered an extended contract for next season, but decided to step down for personal reasons. He has a three-year contract in his new role, but Hetherington did not rule out a return by Bell to the post of head coach.

With 10 per cent of the club's annual gross income — £250,000 — committed to community programmes and youth development, Bell's appointment to harness elite talent is an all-too-rare example of a club tackling the root cause of the domestic game's failings compared with Australia.

"The single biggest problem is the lack of focus we give to the development of young players. That's where the Australian game is far superior," Hetherington said.

☐ Less than a month after he became chairman, Roy Waudby has left Hull Sharks, who have won promotion to the Super League next season. Two other directors have been asked to leave by the club's owner, David Lloyd, the former tennis player.

هكذا من الإصل

Montgomerie succumbs to Faxon and fatigue at World Match Play Championship

Els gives wayward Woosnam brush-off

BY JOHN HOPKINS
GOLF CORRESPONDENT

ERNIE ELS brushed aside Ian Woosnam in the second round of the Toyota World Match Play Championship at Wentworth yesterday. On a glorious autumn day, when there were a few sleepy flies in the air, Woosnam presented little more of a problem to the defending champion than one of these flies might have done. Els swatted the Welshman without difficulty, winning 7 and 6. This was almost, but not quite, as heavy a defeat as Woosnam suffered at the hands of Fred Couples in the recent Ryder Cup.

Woosnam's golf these days is very erratic. After his good form in beating Jesper Parnevik on Thursday came his bad play in this thumping defeat by Els. Consistency was never Woosnam's strong suit, but this inability to play in anything like the same way two days running is becoming tiresome to Woosnam.

"One day is good, one day is bad," he said. "You can't play like this. You have to be consistent in this game. I have been like this for a number of years now."

Els now faces Nick Price, of Zimbabwe, who comfortably beat Frank Nobilo in a rematch of a meeting that they had in a matchplay event in the United States in the summer. Els won then and Price knows he will have his hands full today.

"It just seemed that whatever I did, he did better," Price said. "This course is perfectly suited to him because he is a good driver of the ball, a good long-iron player and he has a wonderful touch around the greens."

If Woosnam's defeat was no surprise, then Colin Montgomerie's by Brad Faxon was. Montgomerie, who said later that he was suffering from flu, got weaker as the day wore on. The further the match went, the more Faxon did what Faxon does best — namely he stuck, limpet-like, to his man and holed some huge putts until Montgomerie was beaten 2 and 1.

Faxon has a friendly, freckled face, upon which a wide smile looks rather engaging. Indeed, Faxon is an engaging man, a good talker, probably a rewarding dinner companion. After his victory, his world was rosy.

"It is very satisfying to beat Colin Montgomerie," Faxon said. "He is one of the best players in the world and I got him today. I feel great about it."

Montgomerie looked to be in a commanding position when he went two holes up on the 24th after Faxon missed the green. Montgomerie had played a brilliant 50-yard pitch from a grassy bunker on the right of the 22nd, the ball dying by the holeside, and then chipped in from 15 feet on the short 23rd. To the uninitiated eye, there seemed to be no sign of Montgomerie's flu, nor of the fatigue after nine successive weeks' play of which he was to talk later.

Yet Faxon had noticed something. He felt that Montgomerie's play was on the turn on the homeward nine in the morning and he knew that the longer he could keep the Scot at work, the better chance he had. A 25-foot putt across the 25th green was a good start. Another, a few feet longer on the 27th green, also for a half, was a similarly effective blow.

Then Montgomerie missed a six-foot putt on the 28th. Faxon hit a crisp iron close to the flag on the 29th before claiming birdies at the next two holes as well. Now Montgomerie must have felt exhausted. On the 34th, he had a chance to get back into the match after Faxon had driven into a bunker, but his putt for a birdie slid wide.

"The last couple of weeks have run me into the ground," Montgomerie said. "This order of merit thing is killing me, but going for five in a row might never happen again. I have had no breaks. It is not just tournaments, it is company days on my so-called days off. My batteries are run well down."

There are a few people who would like the chance to play as much golf as Montgomerie does and to make as much money as he does from the game, both from playing it and from promotional deals. Montgomerie has won just over £600,000 in prize-money this year. One tournament remains and, if he is to win the Volvo Order of Merit for a fifth year in a row, he must maintain the lead he holds over Bernhard Langer, at present £45,000.

All was not gloom last night as he returned home for an unexpected weekend off. His wife, Eimear, is pregnant and a third Montgomerie, to join the girls, Olivia and Venetia, is expected next May.

DETAILS

Quarter-finals
E Els (SA) bt I Woosnam (GB) 7 and 6
N Price (Zim) bt F Nobilo (NZ) 6 and 5
V Singh (Fiji) bt S Elkington (Aus) 5 and 4
B Faxon (US) bt C Montgomerie (GB) 2 and 1.
TODAY'S TEE-OFF TIMES: Semi-finals: 08.30 and 12.45: Els v Price 08.45 and 13.00: Faxon v Singh.
TELEVISION: Today: BBC1: In *Grandstand*, from 1.05pm (highlights 12.20am) Tomorrow: BBC2: In *Sunday Grandstand*, from 1.35pm (highlights 12am)

Els, relishing the perfect conditions, aims at the 8th on his way to a comfortable defeat of an erratic Woosnam at Wentworth yesterday. Photograph: Hugh Routledge

IAN STEWART

Eddie Brown, of KFJ Resourcing, plays the 1st at Dalmahoy yesterday

Buxton makes most of good fortune

BY MEL WEBB

HE WAS the luckiest man in Edinburgh. Mike Buxton was his name, and he got into a team playing in the Scotland regional final of *The Times* MeesPierson Corporate Golf Challenge yesterday by the unlikeliest route. He crept into the team by the back door, then played a leading role in an unexpected victory.

Buxton played in the golf day organised last month by Jimmy Rankeillor, the owner of Shandon Leisure, a snooker, leisure and fitness complex in Edinburgh, but failed to cover himself in glory, finishing a distant seventh. He had played in the national final of the Challenge in 1995, but thought that he had missed the boat by a mile this time. Then fate stepped in.

Craig White, who finished fourth in the golf day, could not play in the team. He was on holiday in Las Vegas. So were the men who finished fifth and sixth. Step this way, Mr Buxton. Given only three days' notice that he would be required, Buxton rearranged his calendar so that he could play at windy, rainswept Dalmahoy.

There he joined Rankeillor, Jimmy Ewing and John Williamson in a victory with 84 Stableford points, two ahead of Thermal Transfer (Scotland) with Strathmore Mineral Water third. Shandon were the last four on the course, whipping victory from under the noses of their nearest rivals.

Buxton, an eight-handicapper, had the golfing skills to help his team and Ewing, a 13-handicap member of Dalmahoy, the local knowledge. Together they anchored their two two-balls to an impressive performance.

Buxton gave Williamson, his partner, and himself the best of starts on each nine. At the par-five 10th, their first, he hit a driver then put a two-wood on the green. Two putts from 60 feet gave him a birdie. At the 1st, also a par-five, his drive was followed by a two-wood, this time just short of the green, a chip and one putt from 20 feet for another birdie.

Williamson was still wearing an incredulous look two hours afterwards. "I was absolute rubbish, and here we are winning," he said. "I can't believe it." Rankeillor also had a glazed look as tournament officials outlined what was in store for the team in the national final at La Manga next month. "This is amazing," he said. "The way we played, we didn't think we had any chance of winning."

Buxton was the team's top scorer with 35 points off his own ball, but the points that put Shandon into the final came from Ewing. He left it until the 18th before he produced his big number, and even then it was a scrambled effort.

He produced a mighty hook off the 18th tee that landed on the 17th fairway. From there he had only the right side of the green at which to aim, got it there with a nine-iron, then hit a sand-wedge to a foot to set himself up for a gross par four, net three, and three points.

Ewing was totally unashamed of his unorthodox route to a par. He firmly believes that it's not how, it's how many that counts. Never was the old saw more appropriate.

RESULTS: 84: Shandon Leisure 82: Thermal Transfer (Scotland) Ltd. 81: Strathmore Mineral Water Co Ltd 80: Sysdrill Ltd, Co-operative Insurance Society 78: Saveheat Insulations Ltd; Scott-Moncrieff Downie Wilson 77: Multicore Solders Ltd, Skipton Building Society 76: KFJ Resourcing Ltd; Holland & Sherry; United Distillers

75: NHS UK 74: BP Chemicals, Orion Engineering Services Ltd, Tubular Industries Scotland Ltd 73: Expro North Sea Ltd 72: Ross Hall Hospital, Robert Morris & Son Ltd 71: Sealoths Travel; Barwell Enterprises 69: Scottish Oils Ltd; Coutts Career Consultants 68: Scottish Cricket Union 67: Peugeot Finance, Standard Life Assurance Co 64: Consort Foodservices.

IN BRIEF

Reformer oversees choice for RFU post

SIR Pat Lowry, whose recommendations formed so influential a basis for the reform of the Rugby Football Union's (RFU) administrative structure, will chair a five-man panel which will select a new chief executive of the union (David Hands writes). Tony Hallett resigned as the RFU secretary in August and his successor will be chosen by a combination of three independent businessmen and two RFU officers, Cliff Brittle and Fran Cotton.

Nigel Wray, chairman of the Burford Group, whose investment has meant so much to Saracens, joins Lowry and Sir John Egan, chief executive of the British Airports Authority, on the panel, which will review candidates considered by a head-hunting company.

Mosley again

Motor racing: Max Mosley was re-elected president of the International Automobile Federation (FIA) yesterday. The Briton was re-elected for a second four-year term by "a record attendance" at FIA's Paris headquarters of delegates from 109 clubs representing 82 member countries, a FIA spokesman said.

Grissom shines

Baseball: The Cleveland Indians levelled the American League championship series at 1-1 last night with a 5-4 victory over the Orioles in Baltimore. Marquis Grissom, the former Atlanta Braves outfielder, hit a three-run home run in the eighth inning for the winning margin.

Neumann leads

Golf: Liselotte Neumann, of Sweden, returned a four-under-par 68 yesterday to take a three-stroke lead halfway into the Takara World Invitational tournament in Sanbu, Japan. She birdied the first three holes and the 6th and 18th. Yuko Motoyama, the leader after the first round, slipped to second at 140 with a round of 73.

Smith quits

Cricket: Chris Smith, the former Hampshire and England batsman, has resigned as chief executive of the Western Australian Cricket Association and will start work for a British-based sports hospitality business in December.

Hendry honour

Snooker: Stephen Hendry received the World Professional Billiards and Snooker Association (WPBSA) player of the year award, for the seventh time in eight years, in London yesterday.

Spice appointed

Hockey: Chris Spice was confirmed yesterday as performance director and Barry Dancer as men's national coach by the English Hockey Association. Both are from the Australian Institute of Sports hockey programme in Perth, Western Australia.

CRICKET

Bold Azhar continues to deny South Africa

BY OUR SPORTS STAFF

HALF-CENTURIES by Inzamam-ul-Haq and Azhar Mahmood saved Pakistan from embarrassment as the first Test match against South Africa ended in a draw in Rawalpindi yesterday.

Pakistan, leading by 53 after the first innings, collapsed to 80 for five when they batted again. But Inzamam and Azhar calmed any Pakistani fears with a sixth-wicket partnership of 68 in 69 minutes.

When bad light forced an early closure, with 12.2 overs remaining, the home team were 182 for six.

Earlier, South Africa were dismissed for 403 in reply to Pakistan's first innings 456.

Inzamam was out after scoring a hard-hitting 56 that included ten boundaries from 82 balls, while Azhar, the man of the match, followed up his 128 not out in the first innings with an impressive unbeaten 50 to become the first Pakistan batsman to score a century and a half-century on his debut.

Azhar's innings was spiced with eight fours and a six. "To be honest, both times I went to the crease, Pakistan were in trouble. But, thank God, I rose to the occasion," Azhar said. "I want to be a match-winner for Pakistan."

Hansie Cronje, the South Africa captain, said that before he announced his team for the Test, the pitch had grass on it. "But when we came again, it was shaved off," he said.

"Nevertheless, we restricted Pakistan to 216 for six on the first day, but Azhar Mahmood, Waqar Younis and Mushtaq Ahmed played outstandingly."

Jacques Kallis and Pat Symcox had given South Africa hope when they each took two wickets after Allan Donald had removed the opener, Saeed Anwar.

Mushtaq Ahmed, the leg spinner, took three of the four wickets to fall after South Africa had resumed on their overnight 359 for six.

Azhar made the initial breakthrough when he had Shaun Pollock smartly caught by the substitute wicket-keeper, Mohammad Wasim, for 48.

Pollock shared a seventh-wicket partnership of 106 with Dave Richardson, who was denied his ninth Test century when he ran out of partners and finished on 45 not out.

FOR THE RECORD

FOOTBALL

European under-21 championship
Group four

SCOTLAND (2) 2 LATVIA (2) 4
Anderson 32 (pen) Polakovs 9
Graham 41 Slesarufs 21
1,780 Petrov 54
Lidaks 57

Sent off: A Kolinko (Latvia Under-21) 29 (at Livingston)

OTHER MATCHES: Group two: Georgia 5 Poland 1 (in Tbilisi) Group five: Russia 3 Bulgaria 2 (in Moscow) Group six: Czech Republic 2 Slovakia 3 (in Pribram)

Thursday's late results
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First division: Norwich 1 Crystal Palace 2.
FA YOUTH CUP: Second qualifying round: Sittingbourne 1 Welling 1; St Albans 2 Stanway 1; Bromley 2 Croydon 3 Replays: Harlow 0 Great Wakering 2, Hornchurch 1 Wembley 2.
FAI HARP NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Dundalk 3 Kilkenny 0
STIRLINGSHIRE CUP: Final: Alloa 1 Falkirk 2.
SPANISH CUP: Second round, first leg: Badajoz 0 Merida 0.
INTERNATIONAL MATCH: Brazil 2 Morocco 0 (in Belem)
SCHOOLS MATCHES: Fuji Film Trophy: Second round: Great Yarmouth 1 Havering 3 (aet); East Berkshire 3 Isle of Wight 1; Bridgwater 2 East Cornwall 4

BASEBALL

MAJOR LEAGUE: Play-offs: American League: Baltimore 4 Cleveland 5 (best-of-seven series tied 1-1)

BASKETBALL

EUROPEAN CUP: Group A: Real Madrid 77 Olympiakos (Gr) 78; Limoges (Fr) 70 CSKA Moscow 66. Group B: PAOK Salonica (Gr) 85 Benetton Treviso (It) 62, Porto 61 Turk Telecom 76. Group C: Ulkerspor (Tur) 67 Barcelona 65; Kinder Bologna (It) 77 Partizan Belgrade (Yug) 72 Group D: AEK Athens 70 Cibona Zagreb (Cro) 55, Olympija Ljubljana (Slovenia) 78 Alba Berlin 72

BOWLS

COUNTY MATCH: Nottinghamshire bt Hertfordshire 165-148 (at Rivermain)

CYCLING

SAN SEBASTIAN: World road race championships: Junior men (121km): 1, C D'Amore (It) 2hr 54min 49sec, 2, M Bolt (Switz); 3, M Salumets (Est), 4, R Sentjens (Holl), 5, M Kessler (Ger) all same time. Junior women (67.5km): 1, M van Mells (Holl) 1hr 50min 19sec, 2, N Braendli (Switz); 3, S Andersson (Swe) all same time; 4, G Giuodyte (Lith) at 1sec, 5, M Cagigas (Sp) same time

CRICKET

First Test match
Pakistan v South Africa

RAWALPINDI (final day of five): Pakistan drew with South Africa

PAKISTAN: First Innings 456 (Azhar Mahmood 128 not out, Ali Naqvi 115)

Second Innings
*Saeed Anwar c sub b Donald . . . 4
Ali Naqvi c Richardson b Kallis . . . 19
Mohammad Ramzan c Cronje b Kallis . 7
Ijaz Ahmed b Symcox . . . 16
Inzamam-ul-Haq c Symcox b Cronje . . 56
Mohammad Wasim c Pollock b Symcox 10
Azhar Mahmood not out . . . 50
†Moin Khan not out . . . 6
Extras (b 2, lb 2, nb 10) . . . 14
Total (6 wkts) . . . 182

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-5, 2-33, 3-42, 4-66, 5-80, 6-148

BOWLING: Donald 11-4-25-1; Pollock 8-1-22-0; McMillan 8-1-24-0, Kallis 7.4-1-21-2, Symcox 16-2-56-2, Cronje 6-1-29-1 Cullinan 1-0-2-0

SOUTH AFRICA: First Innings
G Kirsten c Ijaz b Saqlain . . . 98
A M Bacher c Mohammad Ramzan b Saqlain . . . 50
J H Kallis lbw b Saqlain . . . 61
D J Cullinan lbw b Saqlain . . . 16
*W J Cronje c Ijaz b Azhar . . . 34
B M McMillan c Ijaz b Saqlain . . . 7
S M Pollock c Mohammad Wasim b Azhar . . . 35
†D J Richardson not out . . . 45
P L Symcox st Mohammad Wasim b Mushtaq Ahmed . . . 5
A A Donald c Saeed b Mushtaq Ahmed . . . 0
B N Schultz lbw b Mushtaq Ahmed . . . 1
Extras (b 20, lb 9, w 4, nb 15) . . . 48
Total (8 wkts) . . . 359

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-107, 2-221, 3-228, 4-249, 5-278, 6-280, 7-388, 8-393, 9-399

BOWLING: Waqar Younis 20-8-45-0, Azhar Mahmood 27-1-74-2, Mushtaq Ahmed 58.5-17-126-3; Saqlain Mushtaq 62-13-129-5.

Man of the match: Azhar Mahmood.

Umpires: S Venkataraghavan (India) and Javed Akhtar (Pakistan).

ONE-DAY INTERNATIONAL MATCH: Nairobi: Kenya 347-3 (K Obanjo 144, D Chudasama 122), Bangladesh 197 (A Khan 61; A Kamm 5-33). Kenya win by 150 runs

GOLF

BORDEAUX: Open Novotel Perrier pairs tournament: Leaders after two rounds (Great Britain and Ireland unless stated): 133: J Remacle (Fr) and R Jacquelin (Fr) 64, 69. 135: S Luna (Sp) and J Rivero (Sp) 64, 71. 136: P Hedblom (Swe) and P Sjoland (Swe) 66, 70. 137: P Curry and A Sherborne 65, 72. 138: D Howell and S Cage 66, 72; I Garrido (Sp) and M Carrasco (Sp) 64, 74. A Hunter and G Orr 65, 73. 139: M Farry (Fr) and M Roe 66, 73, J-L Guepy (Fr) and M Besanceney (Fr) 64, 75. J van de Velde (Fr) and B Lane 65, 74. A Forsbrand (Swe) and M Jonzon (Swe) 65, 74. R McFarlane and D J Russell 66, 73. 140: S Ballesteros (Sp) and J M Olazabal (Sp) 67, 73. W Riley (Aus) and C Mason 69, 71; P Lawrie and R Drummond 66, 74. 141: D Hospital (Sp) and F Roca (Sp) 68, 73. 142: A Cejka (Ger) and F Tarnaud (Fr) 69, 73. J Lomas and S Bottomley 69, 73. J Payne and P Price 68, 74. I Pyman and D Carter 67, 75. M Tunnicliff and J Robson 65, 77. R Lee and M Davis 65, 77

WILLIAMSBURG, Virginia: Michelob championship: Leading first-round scores (United States unless stated): 69: D Waldorf 64; B Bryant, 65: G Hrain 68; K Triplett, S Gump, L Clements, B Quigley 67: N Lancaster, F Couples, D Duval, T Armour, C Strange, G Hallberg, M Christie, B Hughes (Aus). 68: J Sindelar, J D Blake, D Stockton Jr, T Byrum, J Sluman, M Bradley, J Leonard, C Perry, D Sutherland, J Wilson, S Kendall, O Browne, S Lowery, P Stewart, P Stacklmar, D Toms, C Smith, J P Hayes. Other score: 74: A Lyle (GB)

SAN PAOLO, Italy: PGA European Challenge Tour: San Paolo Vita Open: Leaders after three rounds (Great Britain and Ireland unless stated): 201: H Nystrom (Swe) 68, 66, 67. 202: F Cea (Sp) 70, 67, 65. 203: K Carissimo (US) 66, 68, 69. 204: T Planchin (Fr) 69, 70, 65, M Brier (Austria) 71, 64, 69. 205: N Joakimides (Fr) 70, 68, 67. M Miller 69, 69, 67, M Pianoli (It) 69, 71, 65, C Edmond (Fr) 69, 69, 67, M Goggin (Aus) 68, 70, 67

ICE HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE (NHL): Buffalo 5 Washington 2; Philadelphia 3 Pittsburgh 1, Chicago 1 Tampa Bay 4, St Louis 3 Los Angeles 2 (OT) Calgary 1 New York Rangers 1 (OT), Colorado 3 San Jose 2 Vancouver 2 Toronto 2 (OT)

JUDO

PARIS: World championships: Finals: Men: Middleweight (under 86kg): Joon Ku Young (S Kor) bt M Spitka (Ger) waza-ari on penalty. Welterweight (under 78kg): Cho In Chul (S Kor) bt D Bouras (Fr) ippon Women: Middleweight (under 66kg): K Howey (GB) bt A von Rekowski (Ger) ippon Welterweight (under 61kg): S Vandenhende (Fr) bt G Vandecaveye (Bel) ippon

RUGBY LEAGUE

World club championship
Semi-final
Brisbane 22 Auckland 16
Brisbane Broncos: Tries: B Walker 2, Tallis, Walters. Goals: B Walker 3. Auckland Warriors: Tries: Oudenryn 2, Endacott Goals: Ridge 2

SAILING

WHITBREAD ROUND THE WORLD RACE: First leg (Southampton to Cape Town): Positions (at 00.00GMT yesterday, with miles to Cape Town): 1, Innovation Kvaerner (Nor) 3,094.7 miles to finish. 2, Merit Cup (Monaco) at 18.6 miles, 3, EF Language (Swe) 24. 4, Silk Cut (GB) 154.3, 5, Chessie Racing (US) 178. 6, Toshiba (US) 355.4. 7, America's Challenge (US) 389.5, 8, Swedish Match (Swe) 419.7, 9, EF Education (Swe) 590; 10, BrunelSunergy (Holl) 610.5

SPEEDWAY

IPSWICH, Billy Sanders International: 1, T Richardsson (Ipswich), 2, C Louis (Ipswich), 3, C Boyce (Poole)

SQUASH

SRA NATIONAL LEAGUE: Irwin Mitchell Hallamshire 2 Armourcolour Priory Edgbaston 3 (Hallamshire names first): P Lord bt Zubair Janjua 9-2, 9-0, 9-0; J Dale lost to C Leach 5-9, 2-9, 9-5, 5-9, N Matthew lost to S Handley 8-10, 9-7, 1-9, 1-9; N Wall bt L Rawlins 9-5, 6-9, 9-1, 9-4; C Beaumont lost to P Nichell 7-9, 3-9, 6-9)

TENNIS

SINGAPORE: Men's tournament: Quarter-finals: M Tillstrom (Swe) bt M Damm (Cz) 7-6, 6-1; M Gustafsson (Swe) bt J Stark (US) 6-7, 6-2, 6-2; N Kiefer (Ger) bt M Rios (Chile) 6-1, 7-5; T Johansson (Swe) bt J Couner (US) 3-6, 6-3, 6-2

FILDERSTADT: Women's tournament: Quarter-finals: I Spalea (Rom) bt A Sanchez Vicario (Sp) 7-5, 6-4; A Coetzer (SA) bt P Schnyder (Switz) 6-2, 7-6; M Hingis (Switz) bt M Maleeva (Bul) 6-2, 6-3; L Raymond (US) bt N Sawamatsu (Japan) 6-2, 6-3

BIRKENHEAD: LTA satellite tournament: Men: Final: B Cowan (GB) bt G Eisenegger (Bel) 6-3, 7-6

SAILING

Lottery windfall raises Olympic medal hopes

BY EDWARD GORMAN, SAILING CORRESPONDENT

BRITAIN'S Olympic team yesterday received more than a fourfold increase in its annual funding with the announcement by the Lottery Sports Fund that it is to give the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) an annual grant of up to £1.1 million.

The money represents a significant injection of funds into elite sailing in this country. It should make it much easier for Britain's leading Olympic yachtsmen and women to concentrate on winning medals, rather than fighting off penury.

Until now, the Olympic squad has survived on around £180,000 a year, half of which was provided by the RYA itself with the remainder supplied by the Sports Council.

This has fallen a long way short of what was required and put British Olympic sailors way down the international pecking order in terms of funding.

The announcement yesterday covers the next 12 months and will be followed at the end of that period by a further large donation for the following three years. The initial grant includes within it a £100,000 provision for the RYA's youth sailing programme. In addition, the RYA is expecting separate lottery grants to be announced next week for its windsurfing, Tornado catamaran and match racing programmes.

After a strong performance at the last Olympic Games in Savannah, where the British team emerged with two silver medals and two fourth places, the outlook for sailors at the Sydney Games in 2000 and for Athens four years later looks good.

John Derbyshire, the RYA Olympic manager, said: "This funding represents an opportunity for our elite performers to turn metal into medals."

☐ *Merit Cup* and *EF Language* have gained ground on *Innovation Kvaerner*, the leader of the Whitbread Round the World Race. Yesterday, *Innovation's* lead over *Merit Cup* was reduced to 16.6 miles with *EF Language* a further 5.9 miles behind as the yachts race towards the Ilha da Trindade, the second way point.

The British entrant, *Silk Cut*, has also made up ground and now trails by 147 miles with *Chessie Racing* 27 miles farther back.

هكذا من الإصل

In victory or defeat, German remains the best in Formula One

Schumacher passes the test of true greatness

FROM MICHAEL CALVIN IN SUZUKA

DARKNESS had fallen on Suzuka. Spectators sat in the eerie shadows cast by the illuminated fairground and stared across the track at a row of garages that exhibited few signs of life. It was a strange ritual, rewarded only by a glimpse of a familiar figure in the maze of packing cases at the back of the Ferrari pit.

Michael Schumacher was chatting to a small group of mechanics, swaying gently as he emphasised an obscure technical point with sharp stabbing movements of his right hand. Since he had no need to be there — Jacques Villeneuve was in his hotel room, reading a biography of the singer, Jim Morrison — his presence was significant.

Villeneuve may well become world champion tomorrow, by finishing ahead of him in the Japanese Grand Prix, but Schumacher will still be unchallenged as the uncrowned king of Formula One. It is not his fault that he is the likely victim of motor sport's central inconsistency, the subjugation of talent to technology.

Schumacher commands universal respect for his ability to redefine his talent, the type that flourishes once in a generation. He has a champion's nature, a tycoon's income and a refugee's work ethic — but, ultimately, he is just another component. Ferrari's failure to give him a car to match the potency of a Williams-Renault dooms him to under-achievement.

Statistics are frequently manipulated according to taste in Formula One, where image is all, yet Schumacher has unarguably exceeded his natural limits in winning 26 of his first 100 grands prix. In the typically precise terms of Ross Brawn, the English engineer who he helped to install as Ferrari's technical director: "Michael wins races he should not do and does not lose races he should win."

He is an ideal physiological specimen, with a low resting pulse rate and a bull neck that is hidden by an angular chin. This is especially important at a circuit such as Suzuka, where a corner like 130 R, taken flat in sixth gear at 160mph, involves a driver pulling 3.2G. In such circumstances, it feels as if his helmeted head weighs 50lb.

Yet it is mental discipline that marks Schumacher as a man for the ages. He excels in adversity, thinks faster on his feet than any other driver. He has an academic's ability to distil information and a card-sharp's sense of timing.

Again, it is instructive to draw on Brawn's unique insight, acquired when they won two world championships together at Benetton. "Michael is ice cool," he said. "His composure is the one thing that makes me believe a third title is still possible."

He may not have entered legend in the manner of Ayrton Senna, whose premature death has given his reputation the sheen of perfection, but Schumacher has had a Messianic impact at Ferrari. He has dominated a disparate team by the force of his rage to excel. Should Villeneuve win the title, the failure will be felt on an acutely personal level.

Mechanics, the poor bloody infantry of the sport, instinctively align themselves to the German driver. They are in awe of his ability and admire the passion that prompts him to monopolise test sessions at the expense of Eddie Irvine, his team-mate. He clearly empathises with them and gives them the unusual courtesy of common respect.

His rationale — "you win together and lose together" — is simple but effective. When Schumacher works late, as he did here on Thursday night, he sends a powerful message that he rejects the institutionalised cynicism of the sport that has enriched him beyond his dreams.

He is a consummate politician, but feels no need to apologise for retaining the enthusiasm he felt as a six-year-old karting champion. "I am a human being," he has said. "I just happen to have a certain talent to drive. There is a big organisation behind me, involving many people who enable me to do what I do best, and I don't want to be fêted as something special."

But special he is. Engineers value his analytical mind, his matchless memory. He can humanise the technology that surrounds him, rationalise and communicate the signals sent by the merest twitch. Brawn's predecessor, John Barnard, who has taken responsibility for the technical development of the Arrows team, speaks from experience.

"It's a kind of mental attitude, a total commitment," he said. "He has this innate ability to go quickly, which means he is able to concentrate on what the car is doing a lot more. He can recount clearly every corner around the lap and this feedback is clear and sharp. It's what all the really good ones have got. Alain Prost was the same. You could talk about something a week after it had happened and he'd still give you the exact picture."

Schumacher has a unique driving style. He consciously pushes his car fractionally over its natural limits as it enters a corner and brakes only after he has passed the last mark on the tarmac, where other cars have bottomed out under braking. His speed comes from his ability to hold a nervous car on the edge of adhesion.

In the wet, the true gauge of courage, technique and reflexes, he is matchless. His victories in Spain and Belgium earlier this year emphasised the gulf in class that is disguised by the championship table. Villeneuve was exposed by circumstance, unable to respond to changing conditions.

Few doubt his capacity to confront the challenge of clinching the championship in Japan, but nobody really believes it will offer conclusive proof of superiority over Schumacher. The German is already regarded as one of the greats, a name worthy of mention in the same breath as Senna, Fangio and Clark.

He knows he is the best. We know he is the best. However hard it is for him to admit it to himself, Jacques Villeneuve probably knows Michael Schumacher is the best.

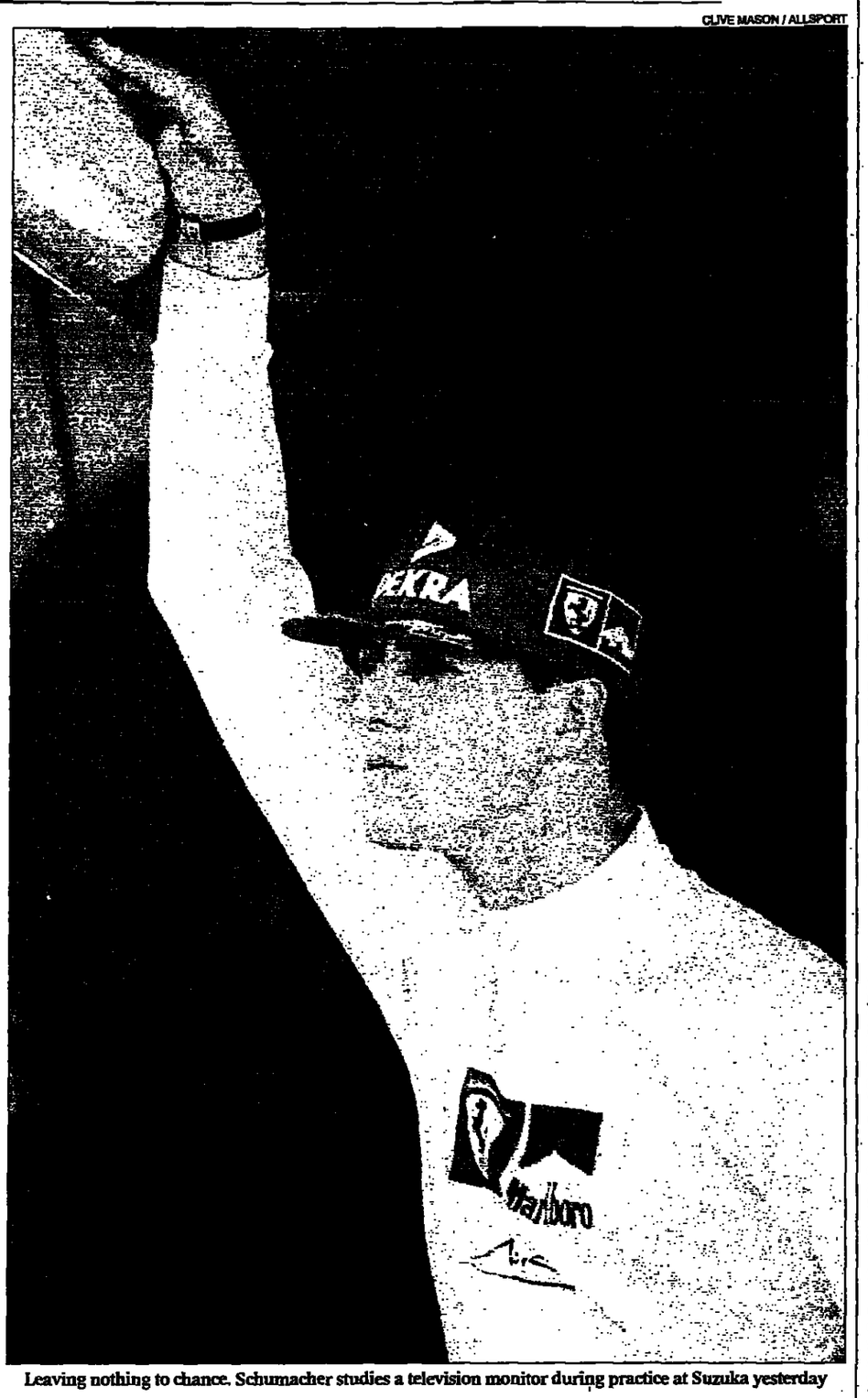
SUZUKA DETAILS

PRACTICE TIMES: 1, E Irvine (GB, Ferrari) 1min 35.903sec; 2, R Schumacher (Ger, Jordan-Peugeot) 1:38.911; 3, O Panis (Fr, Prost Mugen-Honda) 1:38.941; 4, H-H Frentzen (Ger, Williams-Renault) 1:39.398; 5, J Alesi (Fr, Benetton-Renault) 1:39.454; 6, J Herbert (GB, Sauber-Petronas) 1:39.840; 7, D Hill (GB, Arrows-Yamaha) 1:39.898; 8, D Coulthard (GB, McLaren-Mercedes) 1:39.946; 9, G Berger (Austria, Benetton-Renault) 1:40.422; 10, M Schumacher (Ger, Ferrari) 1:40.460; 11, J Villeneuve (Can, Williams-Renault) 1:40.616; 12, S Nakano (Japan, Prost Mugen-Honda) 1:40.653; 13, G Fisichella (It, Jordan-Peugeot) 1:40.720; 14, M Hakkinen (Fin, McLaren-Mercedes) 1:40.724; 15, R Barrichello (Br, Stewart-Ford) 1:40.937; 16, U Katayama (Japan, Minardi-Hart) 1:41.158; 17, J Magnussen (Den, Stewart-Ford) 1:42.000; 18, J Verstappen (Holl, Tyrrell-Ford) 1:42.290; 19, M Salo (Fin, Tyrrell-Ford) 1:42.587; 20, P Diniz (Br, Arrows-Yamaha) 1:42.893; 21, G Morbidelli (It, Sauber-Petronas) 1:44.736; 22, T Marques (Por, Minardi-Hart) 1:46.282

CHAMPIONSHIP POSITIONS (after fifteen races): Drivers: 1, Villeneuve 77pts; 2, M Schumacher 68; 3, Frentzen 35; 4, Alesi 34; 5, Coulthard 30; 6, Berger 24; 7, Fisichella 20; 8, Irvine 18; 9, Panis 16; 10 equal, Hakkinen and Herbert 14; 12, R Schumacher 13; 13, Hill 7; 14, Barrichello 6; 15, A Wurz (Austria, Benetton-Renault) 4; 16, J Trulli (It, Prost Mugen-Honda) 3; 17 equal, Salo, Nakano and Diniz 2; 20, N Lanni (It, Sauber-Petronas) 1. Constructors: 1, Williams-Renault 112; 2, Ferrari 86; 3, Benetton-Renault 62; 4, McLaren-Mercedes 44; 5, Jordan-Peugeot 33; 6, Prost-Mugen Honda 21; 7, Sauber-Petronas 15; 8, Arrows-Yamaha 9; 9, Stewart-Ford 6; 10, Tyrrell-Ford 2.

GRANDS PRIX TO COME: Tomorrow: Japanese (Suzuka). Oct 26: European (Jerez)

CLIVE MASON / ALLSPORT



Leaving nothing to chance. Schumacher studies a television monitor during practice at Suzuka yesterday

JUDO

Gold for Howey ends blue period

FROM JOHN GOODBODY IN PARIS

KATE HOWEY revived Great Britain's sagging reputation in the sport when she took the middleweight title with a display of explosive skill at the world championships here yesterday.

After the disappointment of the Olympics in Atlanta — when Britain, so successful in previous Games, failed to win a medal in the sport — Howey, 24, from Andover, admitted that there had been extra incentive for her to win.

As she stepped on to the mat for the final against Anja von Rekowski, of Germany, she remembered her previous world championship final four years ago, when she was ahead with seven seconds left only to be tumbled to the mat by her Chinese opponent. "I thought it was time to erase those seven seconds," Howey said.

She attacked from the start against an opponent who had met her in a competition in Germany four weeks ago. She knocked von Rekowski to the mat with an inner thigh throw and, then, after 1min 25sec of dominance, hurled the German to the ground by grabbing one leg and wheeling her over her shoulder.

Howey had finally fulfilled the potential that she displayed in taking the world junior title in 1990 and an Olympic bronze medal in Barcelona. She has both the strength with which to sit down on a chair and rise up again with 150 kilos on her back and the speed to run 100 metres in under 13 seconds.

She had looked impressive all day and was at her most destructive in the semi-final against Min Sun Cho, of South Korea, the winner of the Olympic and two world titles in the past four years.

Before the Korean had settled into any rhythm, Howey twice attempted her inner thigh throw, which Cho just evaded. Then Howey scooped up her opponent's legs in a movement like a front-on rugby tackle, lifted Cho to hip height, and dumped her on her back for an *ippon*, judo's equivalent of a knock-out. The contest had lasted 36 seconds.

After the 1992 Olympics, Howey had moved up to light-heavyweight, and it was only after her disappointment in Atlanta that she returned to her original category of middleweight. The decision was splendidly justified yesterday.

Graeme Randall, from Edinburgh, narrowly failed to secure a bronze medal in the light-middleweight division, losing the decisive bout on a penalty point with two seconds remaining.

CYCLING

Sciandri sets off in search of medal

FROM JEREMY WHITTLE IN SAN SEBASTIAN

MAX SCIANDRI, the Anglo-Italian rider who was born in Derby, raised in the United States and who now resides in Tuscany, represents Great Britain's best hope of a medal in the gruelling professional road-race at the world championships here in northern Spain tomorrow.

Sciandri, 30, who won a bronze medal at the Olympic Games in Atlanta last year and who is one of the strongest one-day riders in Europe, is in excellent form after finishing second last weekend in the season's penultimate World Cup race, the Paris-Tours classic. He will be supported in the British team by two other professionals based on the Continent, David Millar and Jeremy Hunt.

Johan Museeuw, of Belgium, the defending champion, has less reason to be confident. "I can't say that I'm in my best form," he said yesterday, having spent the early part of the week recovering from a feverish virus. "We'll have to wait and see." Nevertheless, the circuit is well suited to his all-round strengths.

French hopes rest with the world No 1 and new world time-trial champion, Laurent Jalabert, who is chasing an unprecedented double success, and Richard Virenque, who was second to Jan Ullrich, of Germany, in the Tour de France in July.

In the absence of Ullrich, who is on holiday in Australia, the strongest challenge is likely to come from the talented but erratic Italians, who have several riders vying for team leadership. It is five years since Italy claimed the gold medal and the pressure to succeed has seen the team's outward togetherness dissolve in bitter rifts over tactics in previous years.

Although Italian morale was boosted yesterday by the success in the junior men's road-race of Crescenzo d'Amore, 18, from Naples, the squad suffered a heavy blow when the veteran team captain, Claudio Chiappucci, failed a blood test and was withdrawn from Sunday's elite event.

In yesterday's other race, the junior women's road event, Mirella van Melis, of Holland, held off Nicole Braendli, of Switzerland, to take the first Dutch gold medal of the championships. However, the 18-year-old's success was overshadowed by an horrific crash involving the Belarus rider, Larisa Tchouenko, who fell heavily on her head but, remarkably, suffered only concussion and facial cuts.

SENNA

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RUGBY UNION FIXTURES

TODAY

Heineken Cup
Pool A
Toulouse v Leinster (2.20)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Toulouse	5	4	0	1	162	102	8
Leicester	5	3	0	2	136	88	6
Leinster	5	2	0	3	118	129	4
Milan	5	1	0	4	82	169	2

Pool C
Bath v Pontypridd (2.15)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bath	5	4	0	1	118	109	8
Brive	5	3	1	1	171	117	7
Pontypridd	5	2	1	2	144	124	5
Scottish Bord	5	0	0	5	100	183	0

Pool D
Cardiff v Bourgoin (2.30)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Harlequins	5	4	0	1	182	118	8
Cardiff	5	3	0	2	158	140	6
Bourgoin	5	2	0	3	87	123	4
Munster	5	1	0	4	118	164	2

Pool E
Llanelli v Caledonia (2.0)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Pau	5	3	0	2	147	82	6
Llanelli	5	3	0	2	113	132	6
Treviso	5	2	0	3	139	106	4
Caledonia	5	2	0	3	79	158	4

European Conference
Pool A
Agen v Ebbw Vale (7.0)
Pool C
Stade Français v London Irish (2.0)
Pool D
Northampton v Connacht (3.0)
Pool E
Bridgend v Grenoble (2.0)
Pool G
Biarritz v Newcastle (1.15)
Pool H
Castres v Neath (7.0)

Allied Dunbar Premiership
Second division
Coventry v Rotherham (3.0)
Fylde v Exeter (3.0)
London Scottish v Wakefield (3.0)
Moseley v Bedford (3.0)
Waterloo v Orrell (3.0)
West Hartlepool v Blackheath (3.0)

Jewson National League
First division
Liverpool St Helens v Rosslyn Park (3.0)
Lydney v Otley (3.0)
Newbury v Leeds (3.0)
Nottingham v Morley (3.0)
Reading v London Welsh (3.0)
Rugby v Harrogate (3.0)
Worcester v Wharfedale (3.0)

Second division north
Aspatria v Manchester (3.0)
Birmingham/S v Sedgley Park (3.0)
Kendal v Preston Grasshoppers (3.0)
Nuneaton v Lichfield (3.0)
Sandal v Hinckley (3.0)
Sheffield v Winnington Park (3.0)
Walsall v Stourbridge (3.0)

Second division south
Barking v Clifton (3.0)
Camberley v North Walsham (3.0)
Havant v Bridgwater (3.0)
Henley v Esher (3.0)
Metropolitan Police v Cheltenham (3.0)
Plymouth v Weston-super-Mare (3.0)
Tabard v Redruth (3.0)

SOUTH WEST: First division: Bracknell v St Ives; Gloucester Old Boys v Maidenhead, Launceston v Barnstaple; Matson v High Wycombe, Penzance and Newlyn v Berry Hill; Torquay v Stroud
LONDON AND SOUTH EAST: First division: Basingstoke v Old Colfeians; Harlow v Guildford and Godalming; Norwich v Cheshunt; Southend v Ruislip; Staines v Thanet Wanderers, Sudbury v Thurrock; Sutton and Epsom v Charlton Park, Wimbledon v Askeans
MIDLANDS: First division: Barkers Butts v Camp Hill; Bilgrave v Burton, Kenilworth v Scunthorpe; Stoke-on-Trent v Mansfield, Syston v Leighton Buzzard; Westleigh v Hereford; Whitchurch v Banbury; Wolverhampton v Derby.
NORTH: First division: Bridlington v Hull Ionians; Broughton Park v Tynedale; Doncaster v West Park Bramhope; Macclesfield v Stockton; New Brighton v Wigton; Widnes v Middlesbrough

Welsh League
First division
Aberavon v Cross Keys (2.0)
Abertillery v Caerphilly (2.0)
Dunvant v Rumney (2.0)
Maesteg v Merthyr (2.0)
Newbridge v Blackwood (2.0)
Pontypool v Llandovery (2.0)
Treorchy v South Wales Police (2.0)
Cardiff Institute v Bonymaen (2.0)

SRU League Trophy
Group A
Currie v Gala (3.0)
Glasgow Hawks v Preston Lodge (3.0)
Hawick v Heriot's FP (3.0)
Melrose v Edinburgh Academicals (3.0)
Musselburgh v Kirkcaldy (3.0)
Group B
Boroughmuir v Kilmarnock (3.0)
Dundee HSFP v Watsonians (3.0)
Jed-Forest v West of Scotland (3.0)
Kelso v Peebles (3.0)
Stirling County v Biggar (3.0)

TOMORROW

Heineken Cup
Pool A
Milan v Leicester (2.0)
Pool B
Glasgow v Ulster (at Scotstoun, Glasgow, 3.0)
Wasps v Swansea (3.0)

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Wasps	5	5	0	0	214	76	10
Swansea	5	2	0	3	129	132	4
Glasgow	5	2	0	3	102	152	4
Ulster	5	1	0	4	80	165	2

Pool C
Scottish Borders v Brive (at Netherdale, 2.30)
Pool D
Munster v Harlequins (at Thomond Park, Limerick, 4.30)
European Conference
Pool A
La Rochelle v Bristol (2.0)
Pool B
Montpellier v Newport (2.0)
Sale v Montferrand (3.0)
Pool E
Richmond v Colomiers (2.15)
Pool F
Padova v Gloucester (2.30)
Pool G
Edinburgh v Perpignan (at Goldenacre, 3.0)
Pool H
Saracens v Narbonne (3.0)

RUGBY UNION STATISTICS

LEADING PLAYERS IN EUROPE

TOP POINTS-SCORERS

		Lge	Eur	Rep	Int	Total
1	L Jarvis (Cardiff)	45	93	—	2	140
2	L Labit (Colomiers)	58	72	—	—	130
3	J Valle (Narbonne)	42	76	—	—	118
4	J-F Bouché (La Rochelle)	45	71	—	—	116
5	M Mapletoft (Gloucester)	31	76	—	—	107
6	E Elwood (Lansdowne)	—	79	27	—	106
7	T Castaignède (Castres)	42	62	—	—	104
8	C Lamaison (Brive)	41	62	—	—	103
9	T Lacroix (Harlequins)	26	75	—	—	101
	T Sumpson (Newcastle)	22	79	—	—	101

TOP TRY-SCORERS

		Lge	Eur	Rep	Int	Total
1	D Bory (Montferrand)	3	6	—	—	9
2	K Logan (Wasps)	1	7	—	—	8
	E Boiobolo (Stade Français)	2	6	—	—	8
	M Bibouleit (Colomiers)	2	6	—	—	8
5	S Dominici (Stade Français)	3	4	—	—	7
	S Peysson (Colomiers)	2	5	—	—	7
	C Heymans (Agen)	1	6	—	—	7
8	M Dawson (Northampton)	1	5	—	—	6
	X Garbajosa (Toulouse)	1	5	—	—	6
	V Tuigamala (Newcastle)	1	5	—	—	6

TOP TEAMS

TRIES PER MATCH

	P	Tries	Avge
1 Stade Français	8	53	6.63
2 Newcastle	7	40	5.71
3 Wasps	6	32	5.33
4 Colomiers	8	37	4.63
5 Montferrand	8	32	4.00
Richmond	7	28	4.00
7 Toulouse	8	30	3.75
8 Pontypridd	7	26	3.71
9 Swansea	7	25	3.57
10 Harlequins, Llanelli	7	23	3.28

POINTS PER MATCH

	P	Pts	Avge
1 Stade Français	8	399	49.88
2 Colomiers	8	357	44.63
3 Wasps	6	252	42.00
4 Newcastle	7	293	41.87
5 Montferrand	8	263	32.88
6 Harlequins	7	228	32.57
7 Cardiff	7	223	31.76
8 Brive	8	245	30.63
Toulouse	8	245	30.63
10 Swansea	7	214	30.57

DEFENCES

FEWEST POINTS CONCEDED

	P	Points	Avge
1 Perpignan	8	101	12.63
2 Newcastle	7	91	13.00
3 Richmond	7	107	15.28
4 Wasps	6	98	16.33
5 Leicester	8	104	16.83
6 Narbonne	8	135	16.88
7 Toulon	8	136	17.00
8 Toulouse	8	141	17.63
9 Pau	8	147	18.37
10 Saracens	7	130	18.57

MOST POINTS CONCEDED

	P	Points	Avge
1 Neath	7	331	47.28
2 Bridgend	7	278	39.71
3 Newport	7	243	34.71
4 Grenoble	8	259	32.38
5 Montpellier	8	249	31.13
6 Bristol	7	216	30.86
7 Ebbw Vale	7	207	29.57
8 Nice	8	224	28.00
9 Dax	8	217	27.13
10 La Rochelle	8	203	25.38

WINNERS

HEINEKEN CUP

	P	W	D	L	%
1 England	20	16	0	4	80.00
2 France	20	12	1	7	62.50
3 Wales	20	10	1	9	52.50
4 Italy	10	3	0	7	30.00
5 Ireland	15	4	0	11	26.67
Scotland	15	4	0	11	26.67

EUROPEAN CONFERENCE

	P	W	D	L	%
1 Ireland	5	4	0	1	80.00
2 England	40	27	0	13	67.50
3 France	80	41	2	37	52.50
4 Wales	20	6	0	14	30.00
5 Italy	5	0	2	3	20.00
6 Romania	5	0	0	5	0.00
Scotland	5	0	0	5	0.00

■ Statistics compiled by Stephen McCormack

* Figures for players from top-division clubs in England, France, Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Fixtures included: domestic leagues, Heineken Cup and European Conference, representative and international matches.

WEEKEND OF RECKONING

POOL A: It would be the upset of the tournament if Leinster won in Les Sept Deniers today. Toulouse are favoured, therefore, to win the pool, with Leicester looking to beat Milan and qualify for a home play-off — possibly against Glasgow — as the second-best of the runners-up.

POOL B: Wasps are so far out of sight that they need Swansea to come out firing to provide the sternest possible examination. The Welsh club need to win at Loftus Road to secure a play-off place but the more likely scenario is a Glasgow victory over Ulster, with the Scottish team going through.

POOL C: Three of the four clubs retain an interest in the knockout phase: if Bath beat Pontypridd, they would be assured of a home quarter-final with Brive, favoured to beat the Scottish Borders, as runners-up. A victory for Pontypridd, however, would confirm a play-off place for the Welshmen.

POOL D: A win or a draw in Limerick would give Harlequins their quarter-final place. Were they to lose, Cardiff would have to beat Bourgoin by a huge margin to climb from second place but, even if Bourgoin won, they are unlikely to overtake Cardiff for a play-off place.

POOL E: Everything is up for grabs after Pau's recent fall from grace. They and Llanelli are the likely qualifiers with Pau ahead on points difference but Treviso have done well in the past fortnight and the Italians cannot be ruled out.

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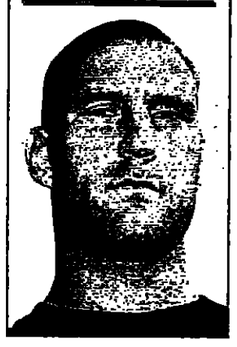
Brooke bond with Quins forces debate

Imports whip up interest but do they help England's cause?

LAWRENCE DALLAGLIO



The papers have been full of Zinzan Brooke's move to Harlequins. He was one of my role models when I was younger. Different players bring different qualities to their game, but he probably has more of the complete range than most. He is a warrior in every sense of the word. You don't play 54 times for the All Blacks if you are not teak-tough.

His signing has again raised the issue of foreign players in England. There are two sides to the argument. One side is that you can buy five Joe Worsleys — a super talent at Wasps, who, I think, will play for England — for one Zinzan. There's also the argument that someone of his stature brings so much on and off the pitch. From an England standpoint, though, fewer England players in the first division is not good news.

As in football, buying from overseas can be worrying. Where are the new, quality English players going to come from if you continue to look overseas for talent? It is not a problem that will disappear overnight and Zinzan could start a trend. A lot of the New Zealand guys' contracts run out at the end of next year and a lot may follow him. It's a question of getting the balance right. The foreign imports have done great things for the sport, but we need to ensure that England's interests are uppermost.

Rugby is going to have to take a back seat today. I won't miss the football for anything. Coming from an Italian family, I have got a foot in both camps, but I will be as gripped as the rest of the nation. My family is from Turin; we could talk about divided loyalties, but let's just say that, whoever wins in Rome, the Dallaglio family will have someone to cheer in the World Cup finals.

I would love to see England win and it would be nice to see them do so in some sort of style. This is the most confident that the nation has been about England's football chances for a long time. We may not go into the match as favourites, but we have two chances and, knowing the Italian mentality, there will be tremendous pressure on them. I just hope we can do it.

Being in Belfast last week was a great *craic*, a throwback to the amateur days. Having beaten Ulster on Friday evening and there being no flight back that night, we enjoyed the hospitality. I half-expected to wake up on Saturday ready to go and watch England play Ireland.

Life is beginning to get hectic again. On Wednesday, Radio 5 Live asked me to be a summariser for their live coverage of Saracens against Richmond. It was good fun to be involved with the professional team there and working alongside guys like Nigel Starmer-Smith and John Inverdale made it easier. I had one eye on getting some radio experience and another on seeing how Saracens are shaping up, because we play them next Sunday in the league at Loftus Road. It was good to see how the other half — the media — lives.

On Monday, we launched the new Nike England kit. It has the St George's Cross look about it to try to generate a real English feel, which has been lacking in the past. Next Tuesday, my book is out — *Diary of a Season*. It takes us through the highs and lows of last season, culminating in the Lions tour — one of the best rugby moments I'll probably ever be involved in. The book is one of those things I can look back on when I am older and say I really enjoyed that season.

My life is now pretty much run by computer, which is vital because in the past I've not been known for being well-organised. Things are changing — slowly. Time management outside of rugby is very important. I have a family to consider. It is important that I spend time with them. I want to. I am trying to get into a situation where I can organise myself, but I couldn't manage without Alice, my partner. Behind every man is a good woman; nine times out of ten, it is the woman who drives the man forward and I'm quite happy to admit that.

> 'Rugby is going to take a back seat to football today'

Tomorrow, it's Swansea, and they'll be a tough proposition because it is win or bust for them in Europe. But we have home advantage and they will have to take the game to us; they'll throw the kitchen sink at us. There is no danger of complacency on our part, even though we have qualified. I'm looking forward to playing against Scott Gibbs. He's a world-class player and a very nice bloke on and off the pitch. He just loves playing rugby football. He is quiet and unassuming off the field, but on it he has the ability to turn it on in an instant.

To be able to do that is a special talent indeed. He relishes the contact side of the sport and I think he gets frustrated playing rugby union because he doesn't get involved as much as he would like. I can understand that because when you are in and out of the game, it is not much fun. Perhaps he should consider joining the back row . . .

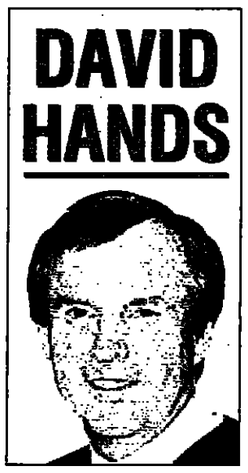
ADRIAN SHERRATT

Guscott in the familiar surroundings of the Bath dressing-room at the Recreation Ground. He joined as a seven-year-old and says he is still happy at the club and in the city

Guscott's relaxing Bath

Virtues of home comforts extolled by England centre enjoying diverse and challenging career

DAVID HANDS



Café pavement society in Bath lacks that certain chic characteristic of Paris, but it is lively enough for all that. A conversation with Jeremy Guscott is interrupted periodically by car horns as yet another acquaintance of the England centre speeds by and, occasionally, there is a brief consultation over prospects for the weekend, or for the return to the game of Guscott himself.

Bath the city takes great pride in Guscott the player, quite patently because he is one of its own. Born in the Larkhall area and brought up there and in Batheaston, many of the friends of his youth remain friends. They recognise that the "arrogant, cheeky, snotty little 20-year-old" (Guscott's own words) has won international recognition through his innate athletic talent, but that his roots remain sound.

"I have real friends here, to whom I can talk about really emotional things," Guscott said. "I can rely on them. I talk to them every week and something would be wrong if I didn't. They know me best, they make sure my feet stay on the ground. If something came up that meant moving away, then I would have to consider it, but I can't conceive of that happening. This is a wonderful place — even if something came up that made life somewhere else so perfect, I'd still end up coming back."

Guscott laughs at the thought of taking his wife, Jayne, and his three daughters — Imogen, 5, Holly, 2, and Saskia, four months — away from the environment that he knows so well, and that knows him. It is a valuable reference point, not only for Guscott as sportsman but Guscott as personality: through television, he has won a reputation as a presenter and he now co-hosts *Gladiators*, the athletic-challenge show.

All of this through rugby, though Guscott is convinced that, if the sport had not created a different, challenging outlook, then some other sport — probably football — would have done. Yet, for all that, Guscott has ridden the wave of a sport bursting from its amateur bonds and into the consciousness of people who may not have spared it a backward glance ten years ago.

Within that time, he has made 48 appearances for England, played in two World Cups and made three tours for the British Isles. He sees another two years as a contracted player with Bath before bowing out, graciously, at the age of 34, although, in the summer of 1999, there will be an additional lure, in the shape of another World Cup, on the horizon. The temptation for Guscott would be obvious.

Perhaps too obvious, and that has never been Guscott's way. "I walk on a field and I'm excited because I don't know what the hell's going to happen. I've got to the stage now where, every time I receive the ball, I'll try to take the greatest advantage of what's on, do what I feel like at the time — no stupid mistakes but no game-plan either, just enjoy the moment."

If that happens, then Guscott will be back in an England shirt after spending a season among the replacements. There are few players so gifted at creation in the crowded area of rugby's midfield, but he acknowledges himself that he derived little enjoyment during the two years leading up to the 1995 World Cup, when recovery from a groin injury and fundamental law changes worked in tandem against him.

That changed last season when Bath, where he has played since being initiated into mini-rugby as a seven-year-old, threw off their internal problems and produced a glittering cascade of matches. It confirmed that Guscott would tour South Africa with the Lions during the summer and that eight-week experience proved the most intense of his career.

The demands of training, the discipline self-imposed by the whole group and the spotlight under which rugby is played in that country left players drained and Guscott himself with a broken arm.

"You have to accept that discipline over an eight-week period, but there's no way you could accept it all season, you wouldn't have any squad members left," he said. "I thoroughly enjoyed the trip, but sometimes, when I wanted to go out and relax, I couldn't. In the previous two tours, you might have got away with it — no chance now. That's why I seriously consider whether I would go on another tour, the main reason being how could you get bigger than winning a series in South Africa with the Lions?"

Bigger, indeed, than dropping the goal that secured victory in the second international in Durban, a score that Guscott confesses supersedes anything else in his memory, even though the game was one of almost incessant defence. "Touring is different to playing for your club or playing for England. If I had to play like that in the five nations', I would get halfway through and retire.

"I have no wish to play rugby like that over a long period. You have to accept it on tour and any disappointment we felt in the way we played in the first two Tests was smashed to smithereens by winning the series. But I don't believe in this concept of entertainment. If a game becomes entertaining, that's luck, but my main motivation is going out and playing as well as I can."

Whatever he is doing — spending time with his family, playing rugby, expanding his experience in commentary for Radio 5 Live's sports department, acting as a spokesperson for the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme — he gives it his full attention. Indeed, he would be delighted to be playing rugby but his arm injury, followed by a strained back muscle, have kept him out.

For Guscott, life is a series of pared-down consequences. Performance on the field comes first and, if that goes well, other benefits follow, commercial opportunities that he examines carefully before committing himself. Guscott hates endless analysis: he is a creature of the present, playing what he believes to be a simple, uncomplicated game.

"Seriously, I couldn't tell you what I'll be doing in three years' time," he said. "I've never had a long-term plan. The only thing that's really solid is the rugby contract." And those roots in Bath.

ON MONDAY

Jeremy Guscott describes the moment when his dropped goal won the series in South Africa

Wasps in pursuit of perfect record

SHOULD Wasps, the English champions, complete this weekend's Heineken Cup pool matches by beating Swansea at Loftus Road tomorrow, they will go through to the quarter-final draw on Tuesday as the only unbeaten team in the competition (David Hands writes). Given Swansea's dire inconsistency, few would bet against it, but Nigel Melville has told his players that this game is, in effect, Swansea's cup final.

"You cannot afford any slip-ups that could lead to catching the losing habit," Melville, director of rugby at Wasps, said. He has called up Martyn Wood at scrum half and Simon Shaw, the England lock, returns to partner Damian Cronin in a pack where Dugald Macer gets a relatively rare outing at hooker.

Leicester know that nothing less than a convincing win over Milan in Calvisano will do if they are to be involved in the play-offs for quarter-final places over the weekend of November 1-2. Their midfield, pinpointed as an area of weakness against Toulouse last week, sees the return of Joel Stransky alongside Niall Malone while Neil Back rests an ankle injury and Eric Miller switches to the open-side flank.

Keith Wood leads Harlequins against Munster, his former province, at Thomond Park in the hope that he does not receive the treatment meted out by Mick Galwey in the first game between the two sides: Galwey's punch left Wood distinctly groggy, though that incident received no more than passing attention compared with the outbreak of violence elsewhere in the tournament.

That drew an unwanted spotlight on Pontypridd, who will lay aside their administrative problems this afternoon in the hope that they can win in Bath. The disrepute charge levelled at Dale McIntosh, their No 8, after the first meeting with Brive is likely to be heard by European Rugby Cup officials on Tuesday; they must also deal with Pontypridd's request for a reduction in the level of the fine imposed after that same game in Brive.

That will be of little concern to Bath, who are desperate to recover after their roasting in Brive last weekend. Victory would bring with it a home quarter-final, against a Pontypridd team missing David Manley and Geraint Lewis from their wings; Jason Lee plays instead while Bath will field Jon Sleightholme in the knowledge that their asking price for his transfer, £100,000, has already been condemned as "silly" money.

ALFRED DUNHILL
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هكذا من الإصل

RACING: CHANNEL 4 COUNTERS LOSS OF YORK PROGRAMME BY COVERING NATIONAL HUNT CARDS AT BANGOR AND WORCESTER

Dr Fong has grounds for optimism

By Richard Evans
Racing Correspondent

AFTER a week when the doping of horses and fires at a top Newmarket yard have given racing an unwanted taste of real-life Dick Francis, punters at Ascot this afternoon stand every chance of being fleeced — albeit legitimately.

Almost 1¾ inches of rain has produced heavy going and, if the forecast is accurate, it is in danger of becoming a quagmire — which limits the formbook's value in the search for winners.

Last weekend backers enjoyed a field day at bookmakers' expense, courtesy of Pasternak in the Cambridgeshire and Peintre Celebre in the Prix de l'Arc de Triomphe, but the layers will be confident of recouping losses today.

RICHARD EVANS

Nap: MYRTLE QUEST
(5.15 Ascot)
Next best: Destin D'Estruval
(4.30 Worcester)

Few of the runners have encountered such stamina-sapping ground, and although a horse's breeding and action offer some clues as to its ability to cope with the mud, an element of guesswork remains. The McGee Group Autumn Stakes (BBC1, 2.00) is a case in point. Rabah, the form choice on his second to the useful Lend A Hand at Doncaster, has never encountered ground softer than good, but Nashwan's progeny usually enjoy some ease. Evening World and Equity Princess have proved they can act on soft but have not produced the level of form of their rivals.

Dr Fong beat the strongly fancied Distant Mirage on his debut at Newbury, having missed the break before running on strongly inside the final furlong. The Henry Cecil-trained runner, who cost $425,000 as a yearling, will relish today's extra furlong and should handle the going, being by Kris. **Dr Fong** worked well on the Al Bahathri gallop last Saturday and can oblige.

Land Of Dreams hardly came off the bridle when landing the Flying Childers Stakes at Doncaster and the Cadeaux Genereux filly had previously run well enough on good to soft ground. However, she might be worth opposing on this surface in the Willmott Dixon Cornwallis Stakes (2.30), especially given her draw towards the middle of the track.

Regal Revolution, who cost 3,000 guineas as a yearling, has been the bargain buy of the season and her listed race success at Ayr three weeks ago was her fifth victory of the season. Peter Walwyn's tough filly likes to race prominently and enjoys easy ground, but the draw is a worry. **Lady Alexander**, winner of the Molecomb Stakes at Goodwood, failed to stay seven furlongs last time and should be more at home over this stiff five. Proven on soft ground, she is well drawn and is just preferred to Halmahera.

The classic generation has found it tough against older horses for much of this season and it would no surprise to see Reine Wells, a four-year-old French raider, fight out the finish of the Princess Royal Stakes (3.00) with **Snow Princess**, the Lord Huntingdon trained five-year-old. Although without a win this term, Snow Princess ran her best race last time on unsuitably fast ground behind Book At Bedtime. Today's ground and trip should be ideal.

Azizzi has the plum draw in the Willmott Dixon Handicap (3.35) and, despite stepping back in trip, is sure to make a bold show. However, **Surprise Mission** is proven on heavy ground, having won in a canter at Chester in May, and Olivier Peslier is an eye-catching booking for Lynda Ramsden's well-handicapped runner.

Away from the gaze of the television cameras, Myrtle Quest makes considerable appeal in the Duke Of Edinburgh Handicap (5.15) given the way he won at Kempton 19 days ago. Roger Charlton had thought the Rainbow Quest gelding needed middle distances, but the five-year-old appreciated being returned to a mile at the Sunbury course when winning from Polish Rhythm, who subsequently ran a cracker in listed company at Newmarket. Raised just 4lb, **Myrtle Quest** should relish the conditions.

Cumani's second fire, page 7
William Hill sold, page 27

JULIAN HERBERT / ALLSPORT

Jafa, second right, comes with a late run to defeat Dancing Drop and Blessed Spirit, left, in the Bonusprint October Stakes at Ascot yesterday

Royal York for crowning glory

TODAY'S RACES ON TELEVISION

BANGOR
CHANNEL 4

3.10: Vintage Taittinger has had a busy time during the summer, winning three times, but the handicapper may have caught up with him judged by his most recent run, and the likely favourite could be vulnerable. Richard Dunwoody is an interesting booking for **Carrolls Rock**, who was with Aidan O'Brien last season. Placed in bumpers and a chase, he is at the right end of the handicap.

3.40: Real Tonic can defy top weight under Richard Dunwoody. He took time to recover from falling on his chasing debut last season but got the hang of jumping by the backend and looks the sort to run up a sequence.

4.15: Millcroft Riviera has the advantage of having won over fences and he looked far from wound up when obliging at Exeter a month ago. However, Robert Alner's runner was not in the same league as **Royal York** over hurdles and Gordon Richards's mare looks more than capable of making a winning start over the larger obstacles. Her front-running style is ideally suited to this tight track.

4.50: Rythm Rock showed sufficient in just two starts for David Gandolfo, after a move from Ireland, to suggest he can open his account here and provide Dunwoody with yet another winner. The form he showed when second at Towcester and third at Uttoxeter is better than anything else on offer. Follow De Call won a weak race over course and distance last month and Raining Stairs looks a bigger danger.

WORCESTER

3.25: Euphoric Illusion's hurdling remains suspect and cost him dearly at Bangor last time. A clear round would give him a sound chance. However, **Bamapour** won with a ton in hand under top weight at Hereford nine days ago and is capable of following up off a 3lb higher mark.

4.00: Dr Rocket is the proven performer over fences but looks weighted up to his best. **Freno**, a half-brother to Waterloo Boy, disappointed on the racecourse last season despite working well at home. However, Kim Bailey is more than hopeful that the six-year-old will be a different horse over fences. Supermick showed fair form over hurdles and should be fit enough for his chasing debut.

4.30: Destin D'Estruval hacked up over course and distance on his final start last term. The six-year-old looked in good trim on David Nicholson's gallops on Wednesday when working alongside Viking Flagship and should be fit enough to do himself justice. Fine Thyne took well to chasing last season, winning three times at Kempton, and is normally a sound jumper.

Richard Evans

ASCOT

THUNDERER

2.00 Equity Princess
2.30 Thanksgiving
3.00 Snow Princess
3.35 Repertory
4.10 HERITAGE (nap)
4.40 Chips
5.15 Myrtle Quest

Timekeeper's top rating: 2.30 REGAL REVOLUTION.

Our Newmarket Correspondent: 2.00 Dr Fong. 3.00 Bombazine. 4.10 WINTER ROMANCE (nap).

GUIDE TO OUR RACECARD

103 (12) 0-0432 GOOD TIMES 74 (CD,BF,F,G,S) (Mrs D Robinson) B Hall 9-10-0 . B West (4) 88

Racecard number. Draw in brackets. Six-figure form (F — fell P — pulled up U — unseated rider B — brought down S — stopped up R — refused D — disqualified). Horse's name. Days since last outing: 1 d stamps, F d flat (B — blinkers, V — visor H — hood E — Eyeshield, C — course winner D — distance winner CD — course and distance winner BF — beaten favourite in latest race). Going on which horse has won (F — firm, good to firm, hard, G — good S — soft, good to soft, heavy). Owner in brackets. Trainer. Age and weight. Rider plus any allowance. Timekeeper's speed rating.

GOING: HEAVY — DRAW: 5F-1M STR, LOW NUMBERS BEST
TOTE JACKPOT MEETING — SIS

2.00 MCGEE GROUP AUTUMN STAKES — BBC1
(2-Y-O: £12,429: 1m rnd) (4 runners)

102 1 DR FONG 23 (F) (Thoroughbred Corporation) H Cecil 8-11 . . . — K Fallon 105
102 2 313 EVENING WORLD 22 (D,S) (T Hely-Hutchinson) P Cole 8-11 T Quinn 104
103 3 0212 RABAH 30 (F) (H al-Maktoum) J Dunlop 8-11 . . . R Hills 108
104 5 6321 EQUITY PRINCESS 21 (D,S) (M al-Maktoum) M Johnston 8-6 D Holland 105

BETTING: 7-4 Dr Fong, 5-2 Equity Princess, 3-1 Rabah, 4-1 Evening World.

1996: HIGH ROLLER 8-11 Pat Eddery (2-5 fav) H Cecil 5 ran.

FORM FOCUS Dr Fong beat Distant Mirage ½l in 7f Newbury maiden (good to firm). Evening World 5l 3rd to Duck Row in 1m Newbury stakes (soft). Rabah 1½l 2nd to Lend A Hand in 1m Doncaster nursery (good to firm). Equity Princess beat Cornishe ½l in 1m Ayr maiden (good to soft). RABAH runner-up in a hot nursery, can return to winning way.

2.30 WILLMOTT DIXON CORNWALLIS STAKES — BBC1
(Group III: 2-Y-O: £23,240: 5f) (14 runners)

201 11 0511552 TIPPITT BOY 28 (CD,F,G) (Highgrove Developments Ltd) K McAuliffe 9-1 J Reid 102
202 12 12021 LAND OF DREAMS 28 (D,F) (M al-Maktoum) M Johnston 8-13 D Holland 108
203 7 11524 BLUERIDGE DANCER 94 (B,CD,F) (A Cox) Rev B Meehan 8-12 . . . K Fallon 96
204 14 102552 BOLD EDGE 10 (S) (Lady Jones) R Hannon 8-12 . . . Dane O'Neill 98
205 14 4211121 HALMAHERA 22 (D,F,S) (A & Exors of Mrs E Holderness) J Balding 8-12 Marie Dwyer 101
206 8 3222422 LEGS BE FRIENDLY 54 (BF) (B-BF Racing) K McAuliffe 8-12 S Sanders 90
207 3 414124 LORD KINTYRE 52 (D,F) (M Calvert) B Millman 8-12 O Peslier 112
208 5 5132512 PURE COINCIDENCE 20 (BF,D,F) (Mrs A Murphy) G Lewis 8-12 Paul Eddery 116
209 10 321110 LADY ALEXANDER 34 (D,F,G,S) (N D Callaghan) C Collins (Ire) 8-10 P Shanahan 119
210 13 63-2356 BANNINGHAM BLADE 21 (D,F,S) (Crown Select) P Harty 8-7 J Quinn 99
211 9 1615 ELLA 25 (D,S) (Sinclair Partnership) Lord Huntingdon 8-7 L Dettori 97
212 11 021 MRS MALAPROP 14 (D,G) (N Fay) M Channon 8-7 T Quinn 105
213 14 2111411 REGAL REVOLUTION 32 (F,G,S) (S Stacey) P Walwyn 8-7 . . . J Lowe 131
214 6 3313 THANKSGIVING 22 (D,G) (Mrs G Mason) D Chappell 8-7 M Hills 123

BETTING: 2-1 Land Of Dreams, 6-1 Lady Alexander, 7-1 Lord Kintyre, 8-1 Regal Revolution, 10-1 others.

1996: EASYCALL 3-8 M Tebbutt (11-2) B Meehan 11 ran.

FORM FOCUS Land Of Dreams beat Tippitt Boy (6lb better off) 2½l in 5f Doncaster group II stakes (good to firm) with Banningham Blade (6lb better off) 3½l 5th. Bold Edge 5¾l 3rd to Deference in 6f Salisbury stakes (good). Halmahera beat Its All Relative ½l in 5f Ayr listed stakes (good to soft). Lord Kintyre 4½l 3rd to Samraalaa in 6f York group II stakes (good). Pure Coincidence neck 2nd to Lady Lucy in 6f Haydock stakes (good). Lady Alexander 2½l 7th to Tarascon in 7f Curragh group I. Blue Stakes (good to soft). Ella 3l last of 5 to Starley in 5½f Chantilly group III stakes (good). Mrs Malaprop best Sunnylad 5l in 6f Catterick maiden (good). Regal Revolution beat Sapphire Ring neck in 6f Ayr listed fillies stakes (good to soft) with Thanksgiving (2lb worse off) 2½l 3rd.

LAND OF DREAMS was most impressive over this trip last time and is sure to go close.

3.00 PRINCESS ROYAL STAKES — BBC1
(Group III: £31,400: 1m 4f) (7 runners)

301 6 31-6345 REINE WELLS 69 (D,S) (Cecilia Phillips) S & S P Bary (Fr) 4-9-0 S Guillot —
302 7 14-0454 SNOW PRINCESS 31 (D,F,G,S) (Lord Ravensdale) Lord Huntingdon 5-9-0 M J Kinane 101
303 2 0-24404 ALDRAU 42 (F) (Trevor Hemmings Racing Ltd) M Stoute 5-9-0 K Fallon 97
304 1 213 BOMBAZINE 35 (S) (J Cunningham) L Cumani 3-8-7 J Reid 101
305 3 -423414 DELURIN 13 (V,S) (Highclere Thoroughbred Racing Ltd) M Stoute 3-8-7 O Peslier 97
306 4 42-1162 GRACEFUL LASS 13 (D,F,S) (R Bridgen) C Cyzer 3-8-7 T Quinn 106
307 5 3-55121 SAAFEYA 14 (F) (Saud A al-Maktoum) J Gosden 3-8-7 L Dettori 107

BETTING: 3-1 Snow Princess, 4-1 Bombazine, 9-2 Reine Wells, 5-1 Rainbow Blue, 8-1 others.

1996: TEE ALLOWED 3-8-7 J Reid (15-2) M Stoute 11 ran.

FORM FOCUS Reine Wells 6¼l 5th to Whitewater Affair in 1m31yd Deauville group II stakes (good). Snow Princess 4¾l 4th to Black Ice Destiny in 1m6¾l Doncaster group III stakes (good to firm). Bombazine 3l 3rd to Eclipse in 1m Kempton listed fillies stakes (good to firm). Graceful Lass beat 2nd to Fiesta in 1m Ascot listed stakes (good to firm) with Delilah (levels) 4l 4th. Saafeya beat Alyda 1¾l in 1m7¾l Haydock fillies handicap (good to firm).

GRACEFUL LASS just touched off by Fiesta here last time, can go one better.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS	Wins	Runs	%	JOCKEYS	Winners	Rides	%
Lady Herries	6	49	13.3	O Peslier	9	40	20.0
H Cecil	18	97	18.6	L Dettori	41	252	16.3
J Dunlop	26	150	17.5	M Kinane	28	173	16.2
P Walwyn	17	98	17.3	T Quinn	29	212	13.7
R Akehurst	3	19	15.8	R Hills	15	133	11.3

York called off again

THE meeting scheduled for York today has been called off because parts of the course remain unfit after heavy rain. The clerk of the course, John Smith, said: "We had good drying weather overnight, but there are patches of false ground and, in the interests of safety, we couldn't take the risk. Some of the patches are in the straight, and it would be impossible to doll them off." York's meeting on Thursday was also cancelled.

3.35 WILLMOTT DIXON HANDICAP — BBC1
(£18,238: 5f) (13 runners)

401 (10) 0616501 TEDBURROW 13 (CD,F,S) (P Dawes) E Alston 5-10-0 . . . K Fallon 105
402 (9) 0000044 CROFT POOL 9 (D,F,G) (Countywide Classics Ltd) J Glover 6-9-12 G Carter 96
403 (1) 12-2024 AZIZZI 21 (F) (C Brasher) C Egerton 5-9-2 . . . L Dettori 98
404 (11) 0620510 RUDI'S PET 21 (B,D,G,S) (Brookside Pipes) R Hannon 3-8-8 . C Lowther (5) 109
405 (5) 6002306 DANCETHENIGHTAWAY 8 (D,F,S) (G Bosley) B Meehan 3-8-7 . . . J Reid 104
406 (3) 5220010 PATSY GRIMES 8 (D,F,G,S) (J Grimes) J S Moore 7-9-7 P P Murphy (3) 111
407 (3) 1144330 SURPRISE MISSION 31 (D,F,G,S) (D Brotherton) Mrs J Ramsden 5-8-7 . J Fortune 101
408 (4) 5232012 ANSELLMAN 14 (B,D,F,G,S) (Anselle of Watford) J Berry 7-8-2 P Fessey (3) 112
409 (8) 4000030 REPERTORY 31 (D,G) (M Saunders) M Saunders 4-8-2 . . . S Drowne 108
410 (6) 1126012 DISTINCTIVE DREAM 7 (B,D,F,G) (K Ivory) K Ivory 3-8-2 Martin Dwyer 104
411 (12) 1034016 GONE SAVAGE 84 (BF,D,F,G,S) (Square Table) W Musson 9-8-1 . T Sprake 107
412 (7) 4341224 SHALSTAYHOLY 9 (D,F,G) (J B R Leisure Ltd) G L Moore 3-7-12 . J Quinn 103
413 (13) 4205313 LEVELLED 7 (BF,D,F,G) (Morgan Ltd) M Channon 3-7-10 . . R Ffrench (3) 103

Long handicap: Levelled 7-8.

BETTING: 9-2 Azizzi, 5-1 Surprise Mission, 7-1 Shalstayholy, Tedburrow, 8-1 Patsy Grimes, 10-1 Ansellman, Distinctive Dream, Gone Savage, Rudi's Pet, 12-1 Croft Pool, 14-1 Levelled, 20-1 others.

1996: TADEO 3-8-12 M Roberts (20-1) M Johnston 17 ran.

FORM FOCUS Tedburrow beat Crowded Avenue 2l in 5f Ascot handicap (good to firm). Croft Pool 2½l 4th to Dashing Blue in 5f Newmarket listed stakes (good). Azizzi 2½l 4th to Wildwood Flower in 6f Ayr handicap (good to soft) with Tedburrow (6lb worse off) 5¾l 13th. Rudi's Pet 5l 9th to Pennyston View in 6f Ayr handicap (good to soft). Dancethenightaway 3½l 6th to Bowden Rose in 6f Newmarket fillies handicap (6f, good to firm) with Patsy Grimes (1lb better off) 5l 8th. Anselleman neck 2nd to Patsy Grimes (2lb worse off) in 5f Haydock handicap (good to firm). Repertory 6½l 14th to Dashing Blue in 5½f Doncaster handicap (good to firm) with Surprise Mission (levels) 9¾l 20th. Distinctive Dream neck 2nd to At Large in 6f Nottingham handicap (good to firm) with Levelled (1lb worse off) 1½l 3rd. Gone Savage 3l 6th to Tadeo in 5f Newmarket handicap (good to firm). Shalstayholy 1l 4th to Dominant Air in 5f Newmarket handicap (good).

TEDBURROW can overcome a 5lb rise in the handicap since his last win here.

4.10 FINANCIAL DYNAMICS RATED HANDICAP
(£12,521: 1m 2f) (11 runners)

501 (3) 0110211 DANISH RHAPSODY 17 (D,F,G) (C Hardy) Lady Herries 6-9-7 . Paul Eddery 95
502 (7) -441213 WINTER ROMANCE 21 (CD,S) (M al-Maktoum) E Dunlop 4-9-6 . M Hills 96
503 (4) -300603 WILCUMA 20 (B,D,F,G,S) (T Warner) P Makin 6-9-5 . K Fallon 96
504 (5) 51010-3 GREENSTEAD 168 (D,F,G) (Sheikh Mohammed) J Gosden 4-9-4 L Dettori 99
505 (11) 2-21102 ALEZAI 29 (S) (H Spooner) W Jarvis 3-8-11 . . . S Sanders 93
506 (6) -231111 ESHTIAAL 15 (B,D,F,S) (H al-Maktoum) J Dunlop 3-8-10 . . . R Hills 103
507 (9) 5001240 ANOTHER TIME 7 (D,F,G) (D Tucker) W Musson 5-8-3 . . . J Reid 101
508 (1) 0120002 LOMBERTO 21 (D,F,S) (S Al Homedy) V Soane 3-8-7 . . . R Ffrench (3) 91
509 (8) 4130004 PREMIER BAY 16 (B,D,S) (Prime Cable) P Harris 7-8-6 G Carter 102
510 (10) 4-31100 HERITAGE 37 (BF,D,S) (Highclere Racing Ltd) J Gosden 3-8-3 . O Peslier 96
511 (2) 60-2112 CUGINA 30 (D,S) (Miss B Sayer) C Balding 3-8-2 . . . S Drowne 108

Long handicap: Lombero 7-13, Cugina 7-13.

BETTING: 3-1 Alezai, 5-1 Eshtaal, Winter Romance, 6-1 Heritage, 7-1 Wilcuma, 8-1 Cugina, Danish Rhapsody, 10-1 Another Time, 14-1 Greenstead, Premier Bay, 20-1 Lomberto.

1996: PROPER BLUE 3-8-2 S Sanders (12-1) T Mills 8 ran.

FORM FOCUS Danish Rhapsody beat Proper Blue ½l in 11¼m Goodwood listed stakes (good to firm). Winter Romance 4½l 2nd to Brahms in 1m3f Ayr listed stakes (good to soft). Wilcuma 3l 2nd to Samum Sands in 1¼m Kempton stakes (good). Greenstead 18l 3rd to Harbour Dues in 1¼m Epsom stakes (good to soft). Alezai 1½l 2nd to Faithful Son in 1¼m Doncaster stakes (good). Eshtaal beat Pinchincha ¾l in 1¼m Pontefract handicap (good to firm) with Premier Bay (5lb better off) 4l 4th. Another Time 2½l 32nd to Pachmak in 1m11 Newmarket handicap (good to firm). Lomberto 2l 2nd to Sharp Consul in 1¼m Newbury handicap (good to firm). Heritage 34l 7th to Arctic Cat in 1¼m York handicap (soft). Cugina 2l 2nd to Bina Gardens in 1¼m Chepstow fillies stakes (good).

ESHTIAAL is sure to make bold bid to complete a five-timer.

4.40 HYPERION CONDITIONS STAKES (2-Y-O: £7,178: 7f) (5 runners)

601 (5) 3121010 CHIPS 21 (D,F,G) (Lucayan Stud) D Elsworth 9-5 . . . O Peslier 98
602 (2) 16 JAZZ CLUB 53 (F) (W Farish III) P Cole 8-13 . . . T Quinn 97
603 (3) 2016400 BATSWING 23 (B,S) (R Wilders) M Meade 8-11 . . . K Fallon 84
604 (4) 10 LA-FAAH 53 (C,S) (H al-Maktoum) B Hills 8-11 . . . R Hills 80
605 (1) 5122503 SMOOTH SAILING 24 (B,S) (A Ferrchi) P McEntee 8-11 . . . J Reid 100

BETTING: 2-1 Chips, 9-4 La-Faah, 11-4 Jazz Club, 6-1 Smooth Sailing, 14-1 Batswing.

1996: ANDREYEV 8-13 M J Kinane (100-30) R Hannon 6 ran.

FORM FOCUS Chips 19l 7th to Xaar in 7f Longchamp group I stakes (good). Jazz Club 13l 6th to Saratoga Springs in 7f York stakes (good) with La-Faah (levels) 18l 7th. Batswing 4¾l 6th to Halmahera in 6f Ayr listed stakes (good to soft). Smooth Sailing 6l 3rd to Sellerin in 7m Sandown stakes (good to firm).

CHIPS will appreciate the drop in class.

5.15 DUKE OF EDINBURGH HANDICAP
(£9,378: 1m str) (19 runners)

1 (17) 0-41060 WELTON ARSENAL 93 (F,G) (Business Forms & Backup) S Bishop 5-10-3 . . R Ffrench (3) 85
2 (6) 0-36000 MUSICK HOUSE 30 (B,S) (Money Mad Mice) G Kelleway 4-9-9 . . K Fallon 99
3 (17) -014023 POLISH RHYTHM 9 (D,G) (S Hassan) G Huffard 4-9-6 . . . J Reid 91
4 (2) 5-31 DESERT TRACK 84 (D,F) (Sheikh Mohammed) J Gosden 3-9-6 . . L Dettori 94
5 (12) 1061430 Q FACTOR 30 (D,F,S) (M Calvert) B Hanson (Ire) 5-9-5 . . . S Drowne 92
6 (15) 159R15 ROCK FALCON 10 (B,D,G) (E Peters) Lady Herries 4-9-4 . . Dean McKeown 92
7 (13) 504-501 MYRTLE QUEST 19 (D,F,G) (Miss M Sheville) R Charlton 5-9-2 . . T Sprake 95
8 (19) 0300045 PLAN FOR PROFIT 56 (F,G) (Professional Plans) M Johnston 3-9-1 . . J Heskins 95
9 (14) 1-60530 TEST THE WATER 21 (C,S) (J Threadwell) R Hannon 3-9-0 . . Dane O'Neill 96
10 (11) 0606-50 POLAR ECLIPSE 158 (S) (J Good) B Meeker 4-8-12 . . M Tebbutt 91
11 (3) -32204- ZYGO 427 (Beechdowners) R Phillips 5-8-13 . . . R Perham 77
12 (9) 2551515 ABAJANY 20 (D,G) (J White & Partners) M Channon 3-8-12 . . J Fortune 94
13 (12) 5-01040 PHONETIC 38 (D,S) (Miss B Sayer) C Balding 4-8-11 . . P P Murphy (3) 89
14 (13) 5-524 SYCAMORE BOY 20 (G Moore) Lord Huntingdon 5-8-9 . . G Peslier 91
15 (10) 0-30100 MARILZ 7 (D,F,S) (Normandy Developments (London)) R Akehurst 5-8-8 . T Quinn 86
16 (8) 6423120 DUMMER GOLF TIME 24 (V,F,G) (Condian Pharm) Lord Huntingdon 4-8-4 . R Hills 89
17 (16) 0543611 ZURS 15 (D,F) (Glendale Partnership Ltd) J Poulton 4-7-11 . . B Muller (5) 93
18 (8) 0224040 CAUDILLO 30 (D,S) (W Hamson-Adair) Mrs P Dutfield 4-7-10 . . J Quinn 93
19 (4) 0102-40 PRENONAMOSS 19 (D,F,G) (Mrs W Green) D Absolom 4-7-10 . . Martin Dwyer 91

Long handicap: Caudillo 7-9, Prenonamoss 7-9.

BETTING: 4-1 Myrtle Quest, 5-1 Desert Track, 7-1 Polish Rhythm, 8-1 Abajany, Dummer Golf Time, 10-1 Phonetic, Zurs, 12-1 Q Factor, Sycamore Boy, 14-1 others.

1996: HIGH PREMIUM 8-9-12 A Culhane (12-1) R Fahey 24 ran.

FORM FOCUS Welton Arsenal 14l 14th to Tumbleweed Ridge in 7f Newmarket handicap (good). Polish Rhythm 2½l 3rd to Inchinor in 1m Newmarket listed stakes (good). Desert Track beat Dr Mathews neck in 1m Newmarket maiden (good to firm). Q Factor 5¼l 12th to Sulfe in 7f Doncaster handicap (good to firm) with Musick House (2lb better off) 8¼l 20th. Rock Falcon 8l last of 5 to Acrulum in 7f Newcastle limited stakes (good to firm). Myrtle Quest beat Polish Rhythm 1¼l (2lb worse off) ¾l in 1m Pompton handicap (good to firm) with Prenonamoss (levels) 10l 10th. Plan For Profit 3l 5th to High Spirits in 1m1f Ripon handicap (good to firm). Test The Water 15l 14th to Star Storm in 1m Ayr handicap (good to soft). Polar Eclipse 4¾l 15th to Break The Rules in 1¼m Chester handicap (good to soft). Zygo 6l 4th to Newvest in 7f Longfield stakes (firm). Phonetic 2l 11th to Pentlow in 1m York handicap (soft). Sycamore Boy 9¼l 4th to Shawin in 1m Haydock handicap (good) with Abajany (levels) 13l 5th. Marilz 8¾l 16th to Pastemak in 1m11 Newmarket handicap (good to firm). Dummer Golf Time 5¾l 7th to Mystoric Mistake in 7f Sandown handicap (good to firm). Zurs beat Healed with Master Midfield in 7f Folkestone apprentice handicap (firm). Caudillo 11l 15th to Mybotyle in 7f Chepstow handicap (good).

PHONETIC has conditions to suit and can return to his best.

YESTERDAY'S RESULTS

Ascot

Going: heavy

2.00 (1m 4f) 1, Dauphan (Mr S Durack, 12-1); 2, New Inn (25-1); 3, Whitechapel (15-8 fav). 12 ran 1¼l, 1½l. W Musson. Tote: £16.50; £3.10, £5.20, £1.10. DF: £106.20. Trio: £85.10. CSF: £257.26. Tricast: £737.77.

2.30 (6f) 1, Wiston Cheese (T Sprake, 8-1); 2, Tussle (9-4 jt-fav); 3, Late Night Out (5-1). Courageous 9-4 jt-fav 7 ran. ½l, hd. J Dunlop. Tote: £9.20; £3.00, £2.10. DF: £16.00. CSF: £24.56.

3.05 (1m) 1, Jafa (R Hills, 5-1 jt-fav); 2, Dancing Drop (6-1); 3, Blessed Spirit (8-1). Palisade 5-1 jt-fav 10 ran. NR: Apache Star. 1¼l, nk. B Hanbury. Tote: £4.50; £1.70, £2.70, £2.30. DF: £11.50. Trio: £40.80. CSF: £30.95.

3.40 (7f) 1, Smart Squall (J Reid, 8-1); 2, Indian Missile (14-1); 3, Pay On Red (12-1). Tightrope 11-4 fav. 15 ran. NR: Admiral. 2½l, 1½l. Lord Huntingdon. Tote: £9.70; £3.50, £4.30, £3.60. DF: £35.70. Trio: £579.90. CSF: £102.08. Tricast: £1,225.73.

4.15 (1m) 1, Ghalib (R Hills, 11-8 fav, Thunderer's nap); 2, Chai-Yo (25-1); 3, Weet-A-Minute (9-4). 5 ran. 2l, nk. W Haern. Tote: £2.40; £1.50, £2.60. DF: £23.90. CSF: £27.04.

4.45 (1m 4f) 1, Taunt (M Hills, 7-1); 2, Mantles Prince (14-1); 3, Matmeo (8-1). Royal Diversion 9-2 fav. 13 ran. 1¼l, sh. D Morley. Tote: £8.20; £2.50, £4.60, £3.90. DF: £49.60. Trio: £210.30. CSF: £91.75. Tricast: £741.20.

5.20 (2m 45yd) 1, Jasetur (L Dettori, 4-1 fav, Timekeeper's top rating); 2, Galapino (6-1); 3, Bold Buster (9-2). 10 ran. 1½l, hd. J Gosden. Tote: £3.20; £1.80, £2.10, £1.60. DF: £12.80. Trio: £19.10. CSF: £23.35. Tricast: £96.92.

Jackpot: £238,492.50 (0.29 winning tickets). Pool of £238,492.58 carried forward to Ascot today).

Placepot: £910.50. **Quadpot:** £119.00.

Carlisle

Going: good to firm

1.50 (2m 1f hdle) 1, Little Miss Rocker (D Parker, 11-4); 2, Real Fire (6-4 jt-fav); 3, Dressington Times (6-4 jt-fav). 3 ran. Nk, 7l. A Dicken. Tote: £3.40. DF: £4.00. CSF: £5.15.

2.20 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, Titan Thai (R Guest, 14-1); 2, Kings Minchal (10-11 fav); 3, Gold Bats (7-2). 6 ran. 25l, 10l. N Mason. Tote: £15.40; £3.60, £1.20. DF: £10.20. CSF: £25.55.

2.55 (2m 4f 110yd hdle) 1, Leap In The Dark (A P McCoy, 2-1 fav); 2, Four From Home (9-4); 3, Meadowleck (33-1). 6 ran. 4l, 7l. Miss L Siddall. Tote: £2.60; £1.50, £1.20. DF: £3.40. CSF: £6.18.

3.30 (3m ch) 1, Royal Vacation (J Callaghan, 4-9 fav); 2, Boarding School (3-1); 3, White Diamond (12-1). 4 ran. 1½l, dist. G Moore. Tote: £1.40. DF: £1.60. CSF: £1.94.

4.05 (2m 1f hdle) 1, Cottage Prince (G Hogan, 9-4); 2, Pentland Squire (3-1); 3, Wise Appointed (6-4 fav). 4 ran. NR: Royal Circus. 5l, 2l. J Quinn. Tote: £3.00. DF: £3.60. CSF: £8.57.

4.35 (2m hdle) 1, Marble Man (D Bentley, 2-1); 2, Wayuphill (7-4 fav); 3, Cross Cannon (2-1). 4 ran. NR: Battery Fired. 1¾l, 9l. M Pipe. Tote: £2.80. DF: £2.20. CSF: £5.54.

5.10 (2m 1f flat) 1, Knightsbridge Lad (R Johnson, 4-1); 2, Tolom Folo (3-1); 3, Lunar Dancer (11-4 fav). 8 ran. NR: C'Mon Tiger. 8l, 9l. Miss V Williams. Tote: £5.90; £1.60, £2.10, £1.30. DF: £7.40. CSF: £15.99. Trio: £18.20.

Placepot: £236.40. **Quadpot:** £20.30.

Huntingdon

Going: good

2.10 (2m 4f 110yd hdle) 1, Peatings (Michael Brennan, 10-1); 2, Northern Fleet (2-1 jt-fav); 3, Just N Ace (7-1). Tudors Tower 2-1 jt-fav. 11 ran. Nk, 9l. G Hubbard. Tote: £12.40; £2.40, £1.40, £2.40. DF: £14.20. Trio: £49.70. CSF: £31.10.

2.40 (2m 4f 110yd ch) 1, Herbert Lodge (N Williamson, 1-2 fav); 2, Moptokko (7-1); 3, Puntezan (5-4). 7 ran. 2l, 5l. K Bailey. Tote: £1.50; £1.10, £2.20. DF: £5.60. CSF: £6.12.

3.15 (3m ch) 1, Fivesleigh Builds (A Thornton, 11-10 fav); 2, Fine Gunner (8-1); 3, Barford Dou (2-1). 3 ran. 2l, 15l. Miss L Russell. Tote: £2.00. DF: £2.00. CSF: £3.55.

3.50 (2m 110yd hdle) 1, Wamdha (A S Smith, 6-1); 2, Star Market (9-4); 3, Ine Man (6-1). Dashing Dollar 2-1 fav. 6 ran. Nk, 1½l. K Morgan. Tote: £7.80; £2.20, £2.10. DF: £6.80. CSF: £20.02.

4.25 (2m 110yd ch) 1, No Light (L Harvey, 5-2); 2, Who's To Say (7-2); 3, Scottish Bomb (8-13 fav). 3 ran. 1½l, 5l. A Turnell. Tote: £2.90. DF: £3.70. CSF: £8.40.

4.55 (2m 110yd flat) 1, Gaflax (M Keighley, 4-5 fav); 2, Fin Bec (33-1); 3, Bigsound (7-2). 18 ran. 4l, 5l. N Twiston-Davies. Tote: £2.40; £1.60, £7.30, £1.60. DF: £64.80. Trio: £185.10. CSF: £64.68. Barton finished first, but was disqualified for taking the wrong course.

Placepot: £36.00. **Quadpot:** £41.60.

BANGOR

THUNDERER

2.10 Johnny-K. 2.40 Hacketts Cross. 3.10 Tremendisto. 3.40 Glentinn Princess. 4.15 Royal York. 4.50 Rythm Rock. 5.25 Curraduff Moll.

GOING: GOOD — SIS

2.10 THREAPWOOD NOVICES HURDLE
(£2,369: 2m 4f) (11 runners)

1 3162 RED NECK 11 (D,F) P Bowen 6-11-5 . . . B Fenton
2 146 YOUNG DALSSIAAN 25 (G,S) A Streeter 4-11-4 . . . T Eley
3 030- JEMMIE'S PROSPECT 219 J J O'Neill 6-10-12 . R McGrath (5)
4 15-2 JOHNNY-K 18 (BF,S) D Nicholson 6-10-12 . . . R Johnson
5 1/P5 MR FUDGE 14 (D,F,G) M Sowersby 10-10-12 . . . D Parker
6 4 OBELOS 7 Miss S Wilton 6-10-12 . . . B Powell
7 GUINNER B SPECIAL 96F J Neville 4-10-11 . . . J Collolly
8 PLAUSIBLUM 768F W G M Turner 4-10-11 . . . J Power (7)
9 0/4- TOBY 169 G Richards 4-10-11 . . . L Wyer
10 440- CRYSTAL JEWEL 169 P Hobbs 5-10-7 . . . R Dunwoody
11 JILL S Brookshaw 6-10-7 . . . C Maude

5-2 Johnny-K, 4-1 Red Neck, 5-1 Toby, 6-1 Crystal Jewel, 8-1 Obelos, 10-1 Jill. 14-1 Young Dalssiaan. 16-1 others.

2.40 STADCO HANDICAP CHASE
(£3,355: 2m 1f 110yd) (5)

1 2F-1 COOLTEEN HERO 12 (D,F,S) R Alner 7-11-13 . . . P Holley
2 -511 FED ON DATS 22 (F,G,S) Miss V Williams 9-11-9 . R Johnson
3 3211 HACKETTS CROSS 56 (D,F,G) P Eccles 9-11-9 R Dunwoody
4 b553 SIGMA RUN 12 (B,D,F,G) J O'Shea 8-10-13 Michael Brennan (3)
5 1022 TEEJAY'N'ATCH 16 (BF,F,G,S) J Goldie 5-10-11 . . S Taylor (5)

2-1 Fed On Dats, 5-2 Cooltein Hero, 3-1 Hacketts Cross, 7-1 Teejay'n'atch, 8-1 Sigma Run.

3.10 RUMARK HANDICAP HURDLE — C4
(£3,534: 2m 1f) (9)

1 030- MISS ROBERTO 212 (G,S) J O'Shea 4-12-0 Michael Brennan (3) 90
2 045- SAINT CIEL 22F (G,S) F Jordan 9-11-6 . . . R Johnson 103
3

هكذا من الإصل

How I mastered the join-up in minutes and achieved a deep mutual understanding with Murphy

Learning to see eye to eye

SIMON BARNES

Talking horse

I have spent about 20 years trying to force the door open, and I think I've done quite well. I have pushed and shoved and hammered, and I have managed to open up a fair chink. And if I look through it, I can get a good idea of the beauties that lie on the far side. Twenty years of shoving. *Now* they tell me. Now they tell me that the door opens inwards.

I write these words in a fair amount of emotional turmoil. Because I have visited a man whose work redefines the relationship between humans and horses — and that is what all the horse sports are about, from racing through dressage to pony club games.

In Richard Maxwell's yard, not far from Newmarket, is a racehorse that won't race. It is like the famous Hamlet cigar ad: he simply refuses to leave the starting stalls. There is a dressage horse covered in scars; it is given to violent self-mutilation. There is an eventing horse that rears up and bends backwards like a banana. It sometimes does this on one leg. There is also a child's pony that refuses to get on its trailer. "No snobbery here," Maxwell pointed out.

And there are half a dozen young horses that must be backed. This is horse jargon, not for placing a bet, but for teaching a horse to accept a rider. The traditional term for initial training of a young horse is "breaking". Maxwell talks about "starting" and, in that semantic nicety, lies a revolution: something that calls in to question the countless millennia of the relationship between man and horse. One other thing about the yard: there is not a single whip.

Maxwell is — already I can see him wince — a horse whisperer. Naturally he feels somewhat ambivalent about the blockbusting book that brought the new school of horsemanship into the popular mind.

Maxwell is glad that people have heard of it all — not least because it brings him clients, young horses for starting, gone-wrong horses for curing. But he is not a phoney miracle-worker, he is not a faith healer. Just another practical horseman.

Yet he has worked what looked like miracles with rogue racehorses, horses that had been written off. Some would not enter the stalls, others were simply too aggressive. "Taking Vettori into the stalls was like being trapped in a broom cupboard with Mike Tyson," Maxwell said. Vettori went on to win a classic, the French 2,000 Guineas. Stelvio, another write-off, won the Queen's Vase at Royal Ascot; La Confederation, once told never to darken a racecourse again, picked up a group two race.

It was the Queen that got Maxwell started. She may have said this week that the modern world is leaving her behind but she delighted in the sound of revolution when she heard of Monty Roberts. Roberts is the man behind the new school. He calls it, prosaically enough, "join-up".

Join-up is utterly convincing to almost anybody who witnesses it. Maxwell thought it was rubbish. He was training to be an instructor in the Household Cavalry at the time and was recommended — polite word in the better regiments for "ordered" — to watch a Monty Roberts demonstration. "We sat there like schoolkids and picked holes in it," Maxwell said.

But Maxwell subsequently found himself with 35 horses to "back" in two weeks. This, by the way, is impossible. Maxwell and a colleague did it by using join-up. Not a single injury was sustained by any of the horses or horsemen.

Maxwell went on to work for Roberts and subsequently left the Household Cavalry and went to California to work for Roberts on his home ground. Then he set up on his own in England. And naturally, he has had a good share of being despised and rejected. The military tradition penetrates all aspects of horsiness: there is a right and a wrong way to do things, and you do not question it. Racing, in particular, is not so much indifferent as hostile. In truth, most people in racing are too much involved with today and tomorrow; there is never any time for a radical rethink of the fundamental tenets of horsemanship. Doubts only come when a horse goes thoroughly wrong. For many, Maxwell is merely a last resort, the man to go to when all else fails. Naturally, he would prefer his method to be a first resort.

Back to the yard where Maxwell is working a young mare for the first time. A tough individual: the sort, in animal behaviour jargon, who would become an alpha female, the dominant mare in her herd. Maxwell was seeking, by eye contact and body language, to establish himself as the dominant animal of the two.

"She doesn't want to accept me," he said, without for a second taking his eye from the mare. "She has a lifetime of baggage to get rid of." And as I watch, the daily miracle occurred: the mare accepted the dominant animal, horse and human "joined up".

Bring on a new horse, and a new human. The horse was not a problem animal but an ordinary decent sort, belonging to Maxwell, called Murphy. It was a human that was the problem. I know. I was that human.

But in less than a minute, I had Murphy cantering away from me, at my decision. Within a couple of minutes, I could change his direction at will. Looking hard at his inside eye as he circled around me, my body turned towards him. This was, I learnt, a form of considerable aggression. I was sending the horse away, as if in punishment for some misdeed.

Roberts learnt this from watching feral horses in the United States. They send away a horse that has stepped out of line, upset a dominant animal. He is barred from the herd. He may affect unconcern, but more than anything else in life, he wants to be back. It is his nature. Also, solitude can be fatal — a lone horse is ten times more vulnerable to predators. He *needs*, above all things, to be part of the herd.

Murphy cocked his right ear towards me. It was the beginning of a request to return to the herd. I made a concession: I permitted him to trot, moderating my body language in imitation of Maxwell. The horse lowered his head, chewed with his lips, poked out his tongue. It was a plaintive request for forgiveness. I forgave. I turned away from him, my eye leaving his. I stopped moving.

After about 30 seconds, I felt a soft nudge on my shoulder. The horse had "joined up" with me. And so, for about 15 minutes, I walked about. Very quickly, then slowly, sometimes stopping dead. Everything I did, Murphy did a pace behind me.

It was stunning, and I was stunned. It is not something the horse learns. Horses have always known it. It is humans that have had to learn it; and then to show the horse that they have done so. In this way, humans have penetrated deeper than ever before into the border-country that lies between our two species.

Perhaps I have made all this sound a bit touchy-feely-happy-clappy. It is not. It is very tough indeed: to send a horse away is a severe scalding, in some ways more severe than a whipping. But it is how horses deal with horses. And with this method, the way is open for a deeper understanding — a deeper *mutual* understanding — than ever before. I'm a better horseman than I was last week.

HUGH ROUTLEDGE

Murphy is never more content than when in close contact with Maxwell or another human with whom he has joined up

GUIDE TO THE WEEKEND FIXTURES

Today

RUGBY LEAGUE

World club championship
Semi-final

Cronulla v Hunter (10 30am) .....

NATIONAL CONFERENCE LEAGUE (all kick-offs 2 30): Premier division: Askam v Leigh Miners; Beverley v Woolston, Heworth v Wigan St Patrick's, Lock Lane v Dudley Hill, Mayfield v West Hull; Oldham St Anne's v Egremont; Walney Central v Siddleworth. First division: Barrow Island v Milom, East Leeds v Milford; Leigh East v Rochdl; Moldgreen v Blackbrook; Oulton v Thornhill; Skirlaugh v Eastmoor; Wigan St Jude's v Shaw Cross. Second division: Dewsbury Moor v Normanton; Dodworth v London Students

HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Barford Tigers v Doncaster (Alumwell Community Centre, Walsall, 12 0); Beeston v Cannock (Highfields, Nottingham, 1.30); Canterbury v Reading (Polo Farm, 1 30), East Grinstead v Colite (Saint Hill, 2.0); Guildford v Old Loughtonians (King's Manor School, 12 0); Hounslow v Teddington (Dukes Meadow, Chiswick 1 30)

SOUTH LEAGUE: Premier League: Bournemouth v Winchester; Chichester v Herne Bay; Eastcote v Purley, High Wycombe v Gore Court; Old Whitgiftians v Maidenhead, Ramgarhia v Richmond; Trojans v City of Portsmouth Tunbridge Wells v Beckenham; Wimbledon v Fareham, Woking v Anchorians Hampshire/Surrey: Andover v Spencer; Basingstoke v Epsom; Blandford v Barnes; Goan v Dulwich; Harlequins v Old Georgians, London University v Cheam, Old Mid-Whitgiftians v Oxshott; Old Cranleighans v Portsmouth; Oxted v Old Walcountians; Petersfield v Camberley Kent/Sussex: Ashford v Tulse Hill, BBHC v Sevenoaks, Bexley Invicta v Lloyds Bank, Blackheath v Worthing; Brighton v Burnt Ash, Folkestone v Eastbourne; Horsham v Newhaven; Maidenhead v Old Williamsonians, Middleton-Bognor v Mid Sussex; Old Bordenians v Old Holcombeians Middx/Berks/Bucks and Oxon: Amersham v Bracknell; Ashford v Hayes, Farnham Common v West Hampstead Lions v Milton Keynes, Newbury v Wokingham Old Kingstonians v Marlow, PHC Chiswick v Phoenix, Richings Park v Gerrards Cross Staines v City of Oxford; Sunbury v Hendon.

NORTH LEAGUE: First division: Ben Rhydding v Wigan, Chester v Timperley; Durham University v Southport; Harrogate v Sheffield Bankers; Neston v Swalwell; Norton v Formby.

ADNAMS EAST LEAGUE: Premier division A: Bishop's Stortford v Colchester; Cambridge University v Crostyx, Clacton v Ipswich; Luton Town v Peterborough Town; Sudbury v Cambridge City Premier division B. Bedford v Ipswich and East Suffolk, Bury St Edmunds v Dereham; Redbridge and Ilford v Norwich City; St Ives v Old Southendian, West Herts v Romford.

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Crystal Palace v Derby Storm (7.30), Watford Royals v Manchester Giants (7 30), Worthing Sears v Birmingham (8 0)

BOXING. World Boxing Organisation super-middleweight championship (vacant) C Eubank (Brighton) v J Calzaghe (Novotriogio). WBO super-featherweight championship N Hamod (Sheffield, holder) v J Bastilo (P Rico): WBO light-middleweight championship (eliminator) O'Grady (Can) v R Rhodes (Sheffield). WBO inter-continental super-featherweight championship (vacant). D Pithie (Lewisham) v P Griffin (Dublin), British featherweight championship P Ingle (Scarborough, holder) v J Irwin (Doncaster); WBO inter-continental heavyweight championship, P Reid (Sheffield, holder) v W Lewellyn (Deptford): British light-welterweight championship (vacant) M Watkins (Acton) v C Wright (Liverpool) WBO inter-continental middleweight championship: J Matthews (Islington) v D Damington (Bristol); WBO inter-continental cruiserweight championship (vacant). K Oliver (Lincoln) v J Keelon (Sheffield) (at Sheffield Arena)

GOLF: World matchplay championship (at Wentworth).

ICE HOCKEY: Benson and Hedges Cup: Quarter-finals: Ayr Scottish Eagles v Nottingham Panthers (5 0); Bracknell Bees v Manchester Storm (6 0); Newcastle Cobras v Basingstoke Bison (6.30).

LACROSSE: Shepherds Friendly Society League: Premier division: Mellor v Stockport; Sheffield University v Hulmeians; Boardman and Eccles v Poynton, Cheadle v Heaton Mersey; Old Waconians v Cheadle Hulme.

SPEEDWAY: Individual: NPI Elite League riders' championship final (at Bradford, 2.0)

Tomorrow

HOCKEY

NATIONAL LEAGUE: Premier division: Barford Tigers v Beeston (Alumwell CC, Walsall, 2.0); Cannock v Doncaster (Morris Ground, 2.30), Canterbury v Guildford (Polo Farm, 1 0), Hounslow v East Grinstead (Dukes Meadow, Chiswick 2.0), Reading v Old Loughtonians (Sonning Lane, 2.0): Southgate v Teddington (Trent Park, 2.0). First division: Blueharts v Isca (Kitchen Boys School, 2.0); Bournville v Leases (King Edwards Girls' School, Birmingham, 2.0); Bromley v Hampstead and Westminster (Priory Leisure Centre, Orpington 1.0), Brooklands v Sheffield (Georges Road, Sale 2 0); Chelmsford v Gymkhana (Chelmer Park 1 0); Firebrand v Havant (Longwood, Falland, Bristol, 1.0), Gloucester City v Warrington (Pitock Court, 1 30); Harleston Magpies v Hull (Stratford Heath, 2.0); Oxford Hawks v Stourport (Bambury Road, 2.0), Oxford University v Loughborough Students (St Edward's School, 2.0). Surbiton v St Albans (Sugden Road, 2.30)

OTHER SPORT

BASKETBALL: Budweiser League: Newcastle Eagles v Thames Valley Tigers (6.30); London Leopards v Worthing Bears (5 0), London Towers v Crystal Palace (5 0).

ICE HOCKEY: Superleague: Ayr Scottish Eagles v Nottingham Panthers (5 30), Sheffield Steelers v Newcastle Cobras (6.30); Basingstoke Bison v Manchester Storm (6 0), Cardiff Devils v Bracknell Bees (6.0).

GOLF: World matchplay championship (at Wentworth).

SPEEDWAY: Craven Shield: First round: Coventry v Bradford (6.0), Swindon v Belle Vue (7 0). Scottish Cup: Glasgow v Edinburgh (8.30) Individual: George English Memorial Trophy (at Newcastle, 6.30). Amateur League: Newport and Exeter v Reading and Swindon (2.30).

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HEXHAM

THUNDERER

2.20 Mister Ross. 2.50 Eponine. 3.20 Whitegates Willie. 3.55 Flying North. 4.25 Ballyfine. 4.55 Jubran.

GOING: GOOD (GOOD TO FIRM IN PLACES) SIS

2.20 CAPITAL SHOPPING CENTRES NOVICES CHASE (£3,207: 3m 1f) (11 runners)

1 43-1 ETERNAL CITY 47 (F,G) G Richards 6-11-5 .. .. .. A Dobbin
2 060- BRAVE EDWIN 236 C Grant 7-10-12 .. .. .. R Garritty
3 /22- GIVEMEYOURHAND 244P (G) J Charlton 8-10-12 .. .. B Storey
4 F5/4 HICKSONS CHOICE 11 J Wade 9-10-12 .... .. A Thornton
5 /2-F HOBKIRK 21 A Whillans 8-10-12 .... K Johnson
6 PP0- MAMICA 187 M Dods 7-10-12 .. .. .. R Supple
7 410- MISTER ROSS 170 (F,G) J Howard Johnson 7-10-12 D Bridgwater
8 29-2 PEBBLE BEACH 21 (U,F) G M Moore 7-10-12 .. J Callaghan
9 P52- STRONGALONG 140 P Cheesbrough 7-10-12 .... A S Smith
10 50/4 CRIMSON BROCADE 78 C Fairhurst 6-10-7 .. .. .. D Bentley
11 /653 PEACHY BEACH 25 N Mason 7-10-7 .. .. .. D Leahy

15-8 Mister Ross, 5-2 Eternal City, 5-1 Pebble Beach, 12-1 Hobkirk, Peachy Beach, 14-1 Givemeyourhand, 16-1 Strongalong, 20-1 others

2.50 METRO CENTRE JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O: £2,385: 2m) (7)

1 P FORTUNE HUNTER 18F J Norton 10-10 .. .. E Callaghan (3)
2 2 IBN MASRAH 16 Mrs M Reveley 10-10 .. .. P Niven
3 4 THE TIG 14 S Bell 10-10 .. .. J Jackson
4 4 BOUT 16 R Mitchelle 10-5 .. .. A Dobbin
5 2 EPONINE 42 E Elliott 10-5 .. .. A Thornton
6 4P LA PERDOMA 14 (B) Miss M Milligan 10-5 .. .. R Guest
7 0 TRIBAL MISCHIEF 12F D Moffatt 10-5 .. D Bridgwater

11-10 Eponine, 11-8 Ibn Masrah, 10-1 Tribal Mischief, 16-1 La Perdoma, 25-1 The Tig, Bout, 33-1 Fortune Hunter

3.20 REGIONAL RAILWAYS NOVICES HANDICAP CHASE (£2,632: 2m 110yd) (9)

1 F123 BATTERY FIRED 16 (G) N Mason 8-12-0 .. .. .. R Guest
2 53U4 PAPARAZZO 8 G M Moore 6-11-6 .. .. .. P Niven
3 02-4 ASTRALEON 127 (D,F,G) R Allan 9-11-5 .. .. .. B Storey
4 3P-3 WHITEGATES WILLIE 11 J Howard Johnson 5-11-1 D Bridgwater
5 4241 SALEM BEACH 8 (CD,F) M Todhunter 5-11-0 .. M Moloney
6 PP-4 SUPER GUY 17 J Barclay 5-10-6 .. .. .. A Thornton
7 36D- ARISTODEMUS 137 Mrs L Marshall 6-10-6 .. K Johnson
8 440U EARL GRAY 8 (B,F,G) A J Lochwood 10-10-0 .. Miss A Dennis
9 545P OW GOLDEN POND 17 (B,F,G) N Mason 7-10-0 L McGrath (7)

11-4 Salem Beach, 7-2 Whitegates Willie, 4-1 Battery Fired, 5-1 Paparazzo, 6-1 Astraleon, 12-1 Super Guy, 20-1 Aristodemus, 25-1 others

3.55 HENNESSY COGNAC SPECIAL SERIES NOVICES HURDLE (£6,004: 2m) (6)

1 023- NICK ROSS 177 R Brewis 5-10-12 .. .. .. A S Smith
2 P TRIGGERFISH 43 P Monteith 5-10-12 .. .. .. A Dobbin
3 1 FLYING NORTH 8 (CD,F) Mrs M Reveley 4-10-11 .. P Niven
4 -111 JAMAICAN FLIGHT 14 (D,F,G,S) Mrs S Lamyman 4-10-11 A Thornton
5 F113 PALAMON 18 (D,G,S) P Eccles 4-10-11 .. .. .. R Guest
6 603- AMBER HOLLY 154 J Dixon 8-10-7 .. .. .. B Storey

6-4 Jamaican Flight, 15-8 Flying North, 3-1 Palamon, 12-1 Nick Ross, 33-1 Triggerfish, Amber Holly

4.25 IN SITU HANDICAP CHASE (£3,070: 2m 4f 110yd) (7)

1 1421 TIGHTER BUDGET 8 (CD,F,G,S) Dianne Sayer 10-12-0 A Dobbin
2 54-5 RALLEGRO 128 (C,G,S) P Monteith 8-11-10 .. .. I Jardine (7)
3 U1P7 CLASSIC CONTACT 1351 (BF,D,F,G) N Mason 11-11-4 .. R Guest
4 P24- BALLYLINE 177 (G,S) W Kemp 6-11-2 .. .. .. B Storey
5 2213 HAVE A BRANDY 2 (D,G,S) Mrs F O'Brien (Ire) 8-10-6 W Slattery
6 4345 BLAZING DAWN 8 (D,F,S) J Hobbuck 10-10-6 .. K Johnson
7 442U WALLS COURT 8 (B,D,F,G) J Birkett 10-10-0 .. .. M Moloney

7-4 Tighter Budget, 9-2 Have A Brandy, 6-1 Rallegro, Walls Court, 8-1 Ballyline, Blazing Dawn, 10-1 Classic Contact.

4.55 METRO CENTRE SHOPPING ON SUNDAY HANDICAP HURDLE (£2,167: 3m) (8)

1 1F4- SCARBA 182 (C,D,G,S) J Jefferson 9-12-0 .. .. M Mello (7)
2 -231 BALLINDOO 6 (D,F,G) R Armson 8-11-4 .. .. Mr R Armson
3 -433 HIGHLAND WAY 40 (C,F,G) M Todhunter 9-11-3 G McCormack (7)
4 5P-1 JUBRAN 16 (D,F) J Dodds 11-11-2 .. .. .. R Guest
5 4PP- D'ARBLAY STREET 194 (G,S) W Kemp 8-10-13 .. B Storey
6 502- MERALDI 171 P Cheesbrough 7-10-8 .. .. .. A S Smith
7 3-35 DONT FORGET CURTIS 6 Mrs K Lamb 5-10-0 Miss S Lamb (7)
8 4-3P MY MISSILE 21 R Cockburn 7-10-0 .. .. .. L O'Hara

11-4 Ballindoo, 7-2 Meraldi, 9-2 Highland Way, 5-1 Jubran, 11-2 Scarba, 10-1 D'Arblay Street, 14-1 Dont Forget Curtis, 25-1 My Missile

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: G Richards, 21 winners from 72 runners, 29.2%, G M Moore, 16 from 72, 22.2%, P Monteith, 10 from 46, 21.7%, A Whillans, 3 from 14, 21.4%; J Howard Johnson, 14 from 86, 16.3%, R Allan, 4 from 25, 16.0%

JOCKEYS: A Dobbin, 26 winners from 105 rides, 24.8%; D Byrne, 4 from 18, 22.2%, P Niven, 19 from 92, 20.7%; A Thornton, 9 from 56, 16.1%; R Garritty, 10 from 66, 15.4%; R Guest, 11 from 75, 14.7%

WORCESTER

THUNDERER

2.25 Distant Storm. 2.55 Mr Strong Gale. 3.25 Barnapour. 4.00 Freno. 4.30 Destin D'Estruval. 5.00 Prairie Minstrel.

GOING: GOOD SIS

2.25 BROCKAMIN AMATEUR RIDERS SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE (£1,951: 2m) (12 runners)

7 245- FONTANAYS 141 (B,D,G,S) G McCourt 9-12-0 D Harney (7)
8 -320 GRAND APPLAUSE 30 (BF,D,G) M Salaman 7-11-7 J D Moore (7)
9 3PU4 HALHAM TARN 4 (D,S) H Manners 7-11-2 .. A Charles-Jones (7)
10 4-33 CAPTAIN MARMALADE 7 D Thom 8-10-11 .. .. J Crowley (7)
11 3/5- PHROSE 244P (D,S) C Jones 7-10-10 .. .. .. Miss E Scott (7)
12 435P DISTANT STORM 47 B Llewellyn 4-10-6 Miss E J Jones (7) (5)
13 0/4- ALDINGTON CHAPPLE 450 (D,G) T Wall 9-10-8 Miss L Boswell (7)
14 6442 MARGI BOO 18 M Sheppard 4-10-0 .. .. .. O McPhail (7)
15 P4-6 MERELY MORTAL 28 B Preece 6-10-0 .. .. J Goldstein (7)
16 PP-0 FIVE FROM HOME 22 (D,G) J Joseph 9-10-0 .. Miss B Fisher (7)
17 P6P- ANTRIM COUNTY 196P (D,S) H Onde-Powell 12-10-0 W Onde-Powell (7)
18 0/0P DOSSES DAN 13 (B) B Preece 5-10-0 .. .. .. R Bevis (7)

3-1 Captain Marmalade, 4-1 Margi Boo, 5-1 Halham Tarn, 11-2 Fontanays, 6-1 Aldington Chapple, 8-1 Grand Applause, 20-1 Phrose, 25-1 others.

2.55 WARNDON NOVICES CHASE (£2,955: 2m 7f 110yd) (9)

1 429P/ CHARLES QUAKER 517P M Salaman 7-10-12 .. W Marston
2 422- COOL WEATHER 159 (B) C Popham 9-10-12 Mr D McPhail (7)
3 F/34 COQ HARDI DANCER 29 (S) Mrs S Smith 7-10-12 G F Ryan (5)
4 FOR- ICE MAGIC 255 (V) F Yardley 10-10-12 .. W McFarland
5 141- MR STRONG GALE 158 (F,G) P Nicholls 6-10-12 T J Murphy
6 3-43 PHARARE 14 (F,G) R Woodhouse 7-10-12 .. .. W Dwan
7 0125 SOUTHERNCROSSPATCH 13 (F,G) P Bowen 6-10-12 N Williamson
8 1-PF THE HPENNY MARVEL 7 (G) T George 7-10-12 .. R Thornton (3)
9 P30- HYDEMILLA 316 Mrs T Pilkington 7-10-7 .. .. G Hogan (3)

11-10 Mr Strong Gale, 9-2 Southerncrosspatch, 6-1 Pharare, 7-1 Cool Weather, 8-1 Coq Hardi Dancer, 20-1 Hydemilla, Charles Quaker, 25-1 others

3.25 DOMESTIC APPLIANCE DISTRIBUTORS HANDICAP HURDLE (£3,451: 2m 4f) (8) C4

1 5211 BARNAPOUR 9 (B,D,F,G,S) M Pipe 7-12-0 .. A P McCoy 122
2 0U00- HAWKER HUNTER 62F (G) R Alexiaurd 6-11-4 .. A Maguire 110
3 31F- SILVER STANDARD 224 (D,G,S) T Forster 7-11-4 .. S Wynne 128
4 /113 EUPHORIC ILLUSION 28 (BF,G) Mrs S Smith 6-10-9 G F Ryan (5) 115
5 F14- CASSIO'S BOY 163 (D,G,S) G McCourt 6-10-7 .. D J Moffatt 112
6 43F- GIPSY GEOF 155 G Hubbard 6-10-5 .. .. N Wilkinson --
7 0-12 SIKRAM 18 (F,G) R Dickin 4-10-3 .. .. X Aizpuru (5) 114
8 302F VISION OF FREEDOM 8 (B,D,F,G) P Bowen 9-10-0 .. W Marston 116

5-2 Barnapour, 9-2 Silver Standard, 5-1 Euphoric Illusion, 6-1 Hawker Hunter, 7-1 Sikram, 8-1 Cassio's Boy, 16-1 Gipsy Geof, 12-1 Vision Of Freedom.

4.00 DURR FINISHING POST HANDICAP CHASE (£2,655: 2m) (6) C4

1 312- DR ROCKET 138 (B,D,F,G,S) R Dickin 12-11-10 X Aizpuru (5) 111
2 PP44 INDIAN RUN 18 (D,G,S) R Hodges 8-11-7 T Dascombe (3) 106
3 34-2 SUPERMICA 22F (D,F,S) W Mark 6-11-4 .. .. M Richards 108
4 3F/F SPRING SUNRISE 47 (B) B De Haan 7-10-4 .. S McNeill --
5 002- FRENO 135 K Bailey 6-10-2 .. .. .. N Williamson 106
6 -445 HUGH DANIELS 47 (G) C Hemsley 9-10-0 Miss A Dudley (7) 99

2-1 Freno, 7-2 Dr Rocket, Spring Sunrise, 4-1 Supermica, 9-1 Indian Run, 20-1 Hugh Daniels.

4.30 TIBBERTON HANDICAP CHASE (£4,273: 2m 4f 110yd) (5) C4

1 121- DESTIN D'ESTRUVAL 143 (CD,G) D Nicholson 6-12-0 A Maguire 138
2 14F- FINE THYME 168 (D,G) Mrs A Perrett 8-11-9 .. .. M A Fitzgerald 141
3 11P- MONKS SOHAM 146 (D,G) E Holcroft 9-11-8 .. .. A P McCoy 130
4 23UU ANDRELOT 7 (B,CD,F,G) P Bowen 10-10-11 .. .. W Marston 135
5 44-6 LAKE OF LOUGHREA 12 (B,D,F,G) K Bailey 7-10-0 N Williamson 129

13-8 Destin D'Estruval, 9-4 Fine Thyme, 4-1 Monks Soham, 9-2 Andrelot, 7-1 Lake Of Loughrea.

5.00 LEIGH JUVENILE NOVICES HURDLE (3-Y-O: £2,280: 2m) (10)

1 HITCHHIKER R Woodhouse 10-12 .. .. .. W Dwan
2 2P KHAYAL 45 P Murphy 10-12 .. .. L Aspell (3)
3 2 PRAIRIE MINSTREL 28 R Dickin 10-12 .. .. J Culloty
4 RON'S ROUND 12F C Dwyer 10-12 .. .. I Lawrence
5 U322 SLEMIA CREEK 26 (BF) P Hobbs 10-12 .. A Maguire
6 WHIRLAWHILE 106F Miss V Williams 10-12 .. N Williamson
7 P APRIL JACKSON 28 P Dalton 10-7 .. .. R Thornton (3)
8 GROVEFAIR DANCER 21F F Yardley 10-7 .. W McFarland
9 MOONSPELL 138F M Wilkinson 10-7 .. .. W Marston
10 SOUND APPEAL 19F A Foster 10-7 .. .. .. B Clifford

9-4 Prairie Minstrel, 3-1 Slemia Creek, 5-1 Ron's Round, 11-2 Whirlawhile, 7-1 Khayal, 12-1 Moonspell, 25-1 Hitchhiker, Grovefair Dancer, 33-1 others.

COURSE SPECIALISTS

TRAINERS: D Nicholson, 26 winners from 87 runners, 29.9%; M Pipe, 46 from 155, 29.7%, P Nicholls, 14 from 57, 24.6%; Miss V Williams, 4 from 18, 22.2%, K Bailey, 24 from 109, 22.0%, P Hobbs, 25 from 124, 20.2% P Bowen, 10 from 63, 15.9%.

JOCKEYS: A McCoy, 47 winners from 165 rides, 28.5%; L Aspell, 4 from 15, 26.7% N Williamson, 23 from 138, 16.7%; A Maguire, 29 from 179, 16.2%, Mr J L Llewellyn, 4 from 29, 13.8%, T J Murphy 4 from 35, 11.4%.

NATIONAL HUNT FORM GUIDE

Bangor

3.10: Miss Roberts 83 22nd to Commanche Court in 2m1f Cheltenham grade I hurdle (good) Saint Ciel 20l 5th to Muzenberg in 2m Warwick handicap hurdle (good). Tremendisto beaten a distance last of 5 to Nigel's Lad in 2½m Antrim novice hurdle (good) Ferrutino 17l 6th to Rolfe in 2m Stratford novice handicap hurdle (good to firm) Thrower 14l 4th to Manolete in 2m Warwick novice handicap hurdle (good to soft) Tempted beat Lancer 3l in 2m Cartmel novice hurdle (good to firm) Soldier Mak 33l 7th to Lady Magnum in 2m Wincanton juvenile novice claiming hurdle (good to firm) Vintage Tattinger 22l 3rd to Chester in 2½m Perth amateurs handicap hurdle (good to firm).

3.40: Real Tonic beat Plumbob neck in 3m1f Hexham novice chase (good to firm). Glenfinn Princess pulled up behind Gaelic Blue in 3m Stratford handicap chase (good) Top Javelin beaten a distance 2nd to Silvermo in 3½m Newton Abbot handicap chase (heavy) Bayerd 4l 2nd to Crack On in 2½m Chepstow novice chase (good to firm) Cyrill Henry 9l 2nd to Andrelot in 2½m Worcester handicap chase (good)

4.15: Millcroft Riviera beat No Light ½l in 2m11 Exeter novice chase (good to firm) Latest Thyme pulled up behind Gravity Gate in 2m3f Hereford selling handicap chase (soft). Loughdoo 35l 5th to Raglan Road in 3m11 Hereford selling handicap chase (good to firm) Manasse beat El Freddie 3l in 2½m Warwick novice hurdle (good) Saxon Fair 32l 13th to Doradus in 2m1f Sedgefield novice handicap hurdle (good) Holders Hill 5l 2nd to Amlah in 2m Perth novice chase (good to firm) Royal York 49l 5th to Kinnescash in 2m11 Market Rasen handicap hurdle (good).

4.50: Follow De Call beat Ivy Grip ¾l in 2m11 Bangor novice hurdle (good) Bullet Boy 30l 4th to Scarlet Rambler in 2m3f Stratford novice hurdle (good to firm) Charley Lambert 18l 8th to Mahler in 2½m Ayr novice handicap hurdle (good) Raining Stairs 18l 6th to Supreme Charm in 2½m Stratford novice hurdle (good to firm) Rythm Rock 2½l 3rd to Morpheus in 2½m Uttoxeter novice hurdle (good to soft). Treat Me Bold 29l 13th to Sallin Minstrel in 2m Worcester NH Flat race (good to soft) The Secret Seven 35l 10th to Crazy Horse Dancer in 2½m Uttoxeter selling handicap hurdle (good to firm)

Worcester

3.25: Barnapour beat Royal Circus 3½l in 2¾m Hereford handicap hurdle (good to firm) Hawker Hunter 25l 7th to Lightening Lad in 2m Towcester novice chase (good to soft) Silver Standard 1½l 4th behind Edgemoor Prince in 2½m Warwick handicap hurdle (good), previously beat Smith Too by comfortable 2½l in 2¾m Stratford handicap hurdle (good) Euphoric Illusion 6½l 3rd to Major's Law in 2½m Bangor handicap hurdle (good) Cassio's Boy 29l 4th to El Freddie in 3m Ascot handicap hurdle (good to firm) Sikram 6l 2nd to Canton Venture in 2½m Plumpton handicap hurdle (good to firm) Vision Of Freedom fell 7th in 2¼m Wincanton handicap hurdle won by Gerry's Pride (firm), previously 1½l 2nd to Talathath in 2½m Worcester handicap hurdle (good to firm)

4.00: Dr Rocket 12l 2nd to Cracking Frost in 2m Huntingdon handicap chase (good to firm). Indian Run distant last to Jazzy Refrain in 2m 1½l Stratford handicap chase (good to firm) Supermick 1½l 2nd to Walking Tall in 2½m Worcester handicap hurdle (good) Spring Sunrise looked beaten when falling in closing stages of 2½m Huntingdon novices chase won by Fraser Carey (good) Freno 6l 2nd to Silver Mirro in 2m Uttoxeter novice handicap hurdle (good to firm) Hugh Daniels 54l 5th to This Is My Life in 2½m Fontwell novice chase (good)

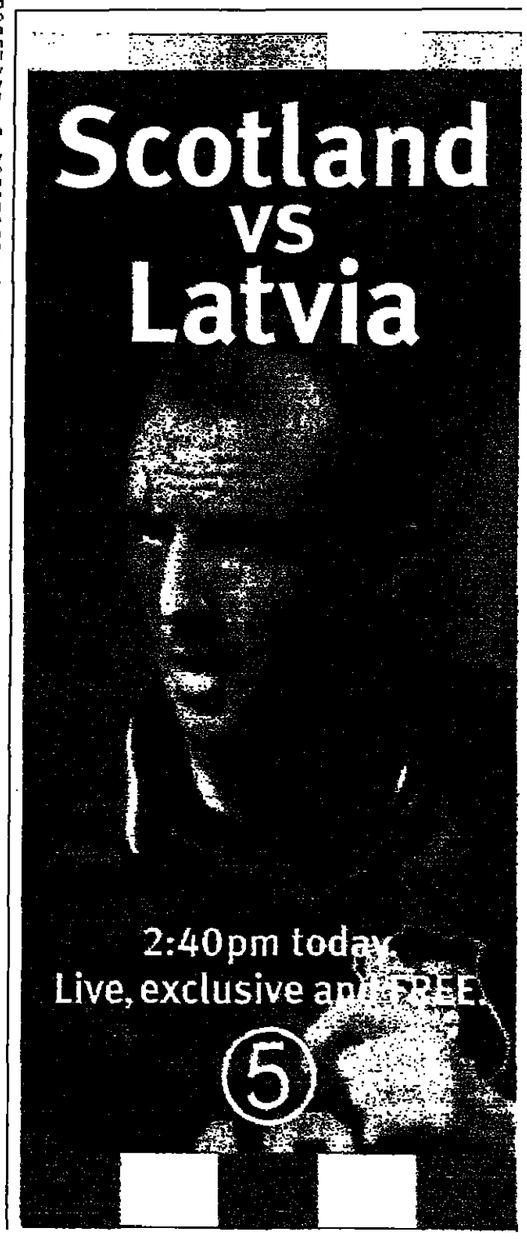
4.30: Destin D'Estruval beat Khalid 11l in 2½m Worcester handicap chase (soft). Fine Thyme fell 7th behind Kenmore-Speed in 2½m Sandown novice handicap chase (good to soft). Monks Soham, on penultimate start, beat Stately Home 1½l in 2¼m Stratford novices chase (good). Andrelot 8½l 4th to Father Sky in 3m Chepstow handicap chase (good to firm) Lake Of Loughrea 47l 6th to Cooleen Hero in 2m 2f Exeter handicap chase (good to firm)

Second Empire to rule

SECOND EMPIRE attempts to add to his growing reputation in the group one Grand Criterium over a mile at Longchamp tomorrow. Michael Kinane rides the Aidan O'Brien-trained son of Fairy King, who is already as low as 6-1 for next year's 2,000 Guineas after his brilliant 2½-length defeat of Muhtathir in the group three Prix des Chenes over course and distance four weeks ago.

Thief Of Hearts, who was beaten over ten lengths into fourth, has franked that form by landing last weekend's group three Prix de Conde. With the testing ground likely to suit, Second Empire should maintain his unbeaten record.

Carrowkeel, trained by Barry Hills and ridden by Frankie Dettori, and David Morley's Alboostan, the mount of Richard Hills, represent Britain in the five-strong field. Stamina doubts surround Carrowkeel, who has never run beyond six furlongs, while Alboostan is stepping up significantly in class on his success in a listed race over this trip at Goodwood last month.



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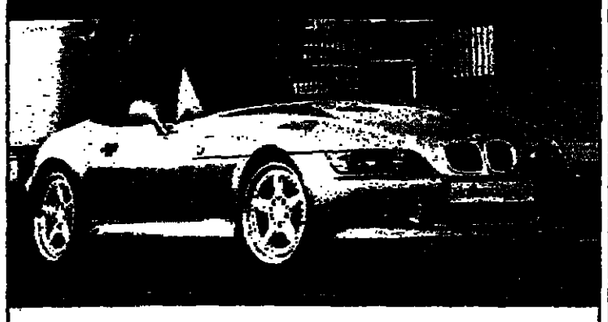

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Testing times for country dwellers
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The kart track leading to F1
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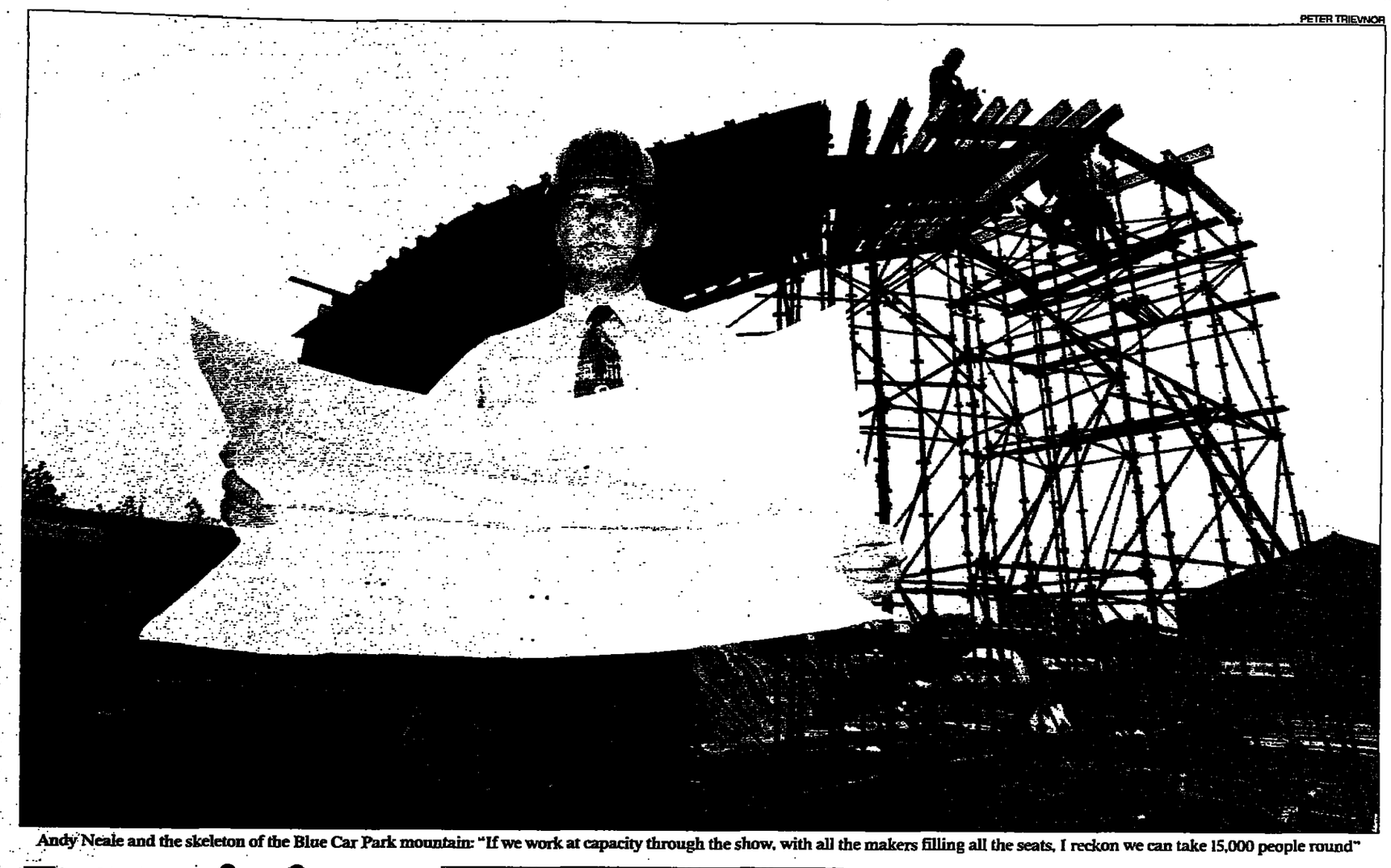
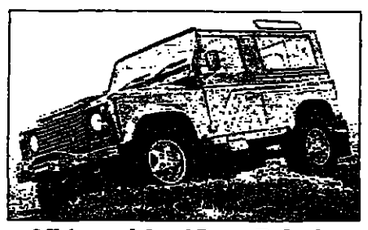
If you can't stand the heat . . .
Page 49

PETER TRIEVNOR

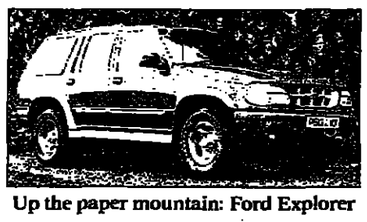


Andy Neale and the skeleton of the Blue Car Park mountain: "If we work at capacity through the show, with all the makers filling all the seats, I reckon we can take 15,000 people round"

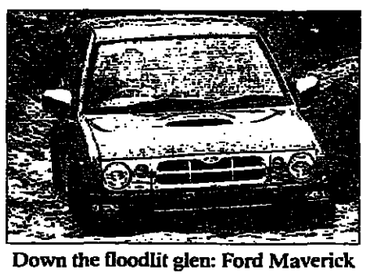
Descending: Land Rover Discovery



Off the road: Land Rover Defender



Up the paper mountain: Ford Explorer



Down the floodlit glen: Ford Maverick

It's rising to the occasion

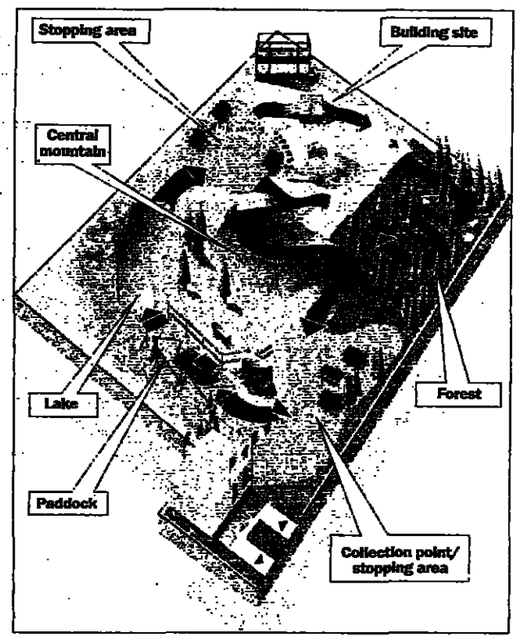
Alan Copps on the 'mountain' that will show what your 4x4 can really do

If the weather is kind, scenic artist Christina Nash will be putting the finishing touches to her mountain as you read this. It will feature heather, rock and a capping of snow. As high as a house, it stands in the unlikely setting of London W8.

For Christina's mountain is the centrepiece of the off-road course being built for the London Motor Show that opens on Wednesday at Earls Court. Together with a small lake, a building site, picnic area, miniature pine forest and a somewhat disorderly show-jumping arena, the scaffolding mountain stands in what is usually called the "Blue car park". It is designed to demonstrate to prospective purchasers the off-road capability of the four-wheel-drive vehicles on the stands of several manufacturers.

As off-road courses go, it's hardly in the Premier League, but as a motor show experience it beats collecting brochures any day. There's a certain irony in this artificial rough-riding taking place in West London. A few miles further West, in the leafy suburbs, one of the phenomena of modern times is more highly developed than anywhere else in the land: the 4x4 full of kids trundling through the traffic provides a focus for discontent among motorists attempting any distance greater than the average school run.

Industry estimates are that 90 per cent of the vehicles sold in the recent 4x4 boom, designed to take rock, dust, water, snow, mud and slime in their stride, will never leave the Tarmac. Of those that do go off-road, few will be required to get further than the grassy fringe of a sports arena or a river bank.



But however often this contradiction is pointed out, the sales of 4x4s go on growing. For what these vehicles offer is not so much transport as the "leisure-oriented lifestyle" beloved of motoring marketing men. You may never plug mud in earnest, but the fact that your vehicle can conveys to friends and neighbours the impression that you are the adventurous sort.

The motor show mountain was sketched out by Andy Neale, managing director of D and S Events, an offshoot of Drive and Survive, the specialists in driver training. The 10 vehicles that will be climbing its 28 degree slope, fording its shallow lake and traversing skips full of rubble on builders' planks will be driven by instructors more used to the testing territory around the Transport Research Laboratory in Berkshire where D and S is based. For safety and insurance reasons, would-be buyers will be carried as passengers, not allowed to drive themselves in unfamiliar vehicles up the paper mountain and down the floodlit glen.

So far six manufacturers have signed up to the project. Land Rover will provide three vehicles, Ford two, Mitsubishi two and Ssanyong, Isuzu and Subaru one each. "If we work at capacity through the ten days of the show, with all the makers filling all the seats in their vehicles, I reckon we can take 15,000 people round this course," says Neale.

4x4 REGISTRATIONS

	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997 (to Sept)
Total	1,778,426	1,910,933	1,945,366	2,025,450	1,777,062
4x4	58,425	71,060	80,362	78,290	63,836
% share	3.29	3.72	4.13	3.87	3.59

Paul Robson, project director, says the idea is to give anyone seriously interested in a vehicle just a taste of what it could do. "All they've got to do is book in on the show stand, come down the steps at the back of Hall 2 and we'll take them around. The mountain is 12 metres high and contains 4,000 metres of scaffolding, covered in builders' wire-reinforced paper and then sprayed in polyurethane foam. There will be 80 trees, ranging in height from two to 6.5 metres and tons of turf, bark and rock. If it works we would hope it could become a regular feature of the motor show."

The course was sketched by Neale and Robson before being engineered by Kevin Hayden, whose company Media Structures specialises on such fantasy contructions, to carry 2½ tons. The whole project has been designed to pass any test set by environmentalists; the trees would have been felled anyway in the thinning of a commercial wood, the turf, bark and rock will all be reused.

Nash, who expects to use 400 litres of paint adding to the finished appearance to Mount Earls Court, says: "I've done castles and villages before, but never a mountain. I looked at the plan briefly to get the feel of it, but it's mainly in my head. We're going to have a nice deep well at the top and a waterfall down into the lake to circulate the water."

Work started a week ago. Says Neale: "We've got 11 days to build it, which should be enough even if the weather turns against us.

"The real test comes at the end. We've got just two days after the show to get rid of it. We'll start the moment the show's over and work through the night."

I've seen the future and it's old hat

The London Motor Show is not racing towards 2000, says **Kevin Eason**

As the motor industry turns the corner into the millennium, will there be battery-powered clean cars or will we shoot along motorways in electronic convoys? The London Motor Show will surely reveal all, cast as it is just a pebble's throw from the dawning of the new century and a world in which technology can solve all our problems to take us the generational leap away from the clattering internal combustion engine.

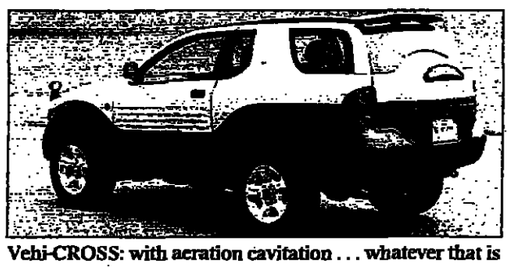
Or not. For it seems many will still be lugging the kids to school in a vehicle that would look more at home on a futuristic battlefield than in the high street, according to a line-up which looks thin on leaps and big on minor hops along the motoring catwalk. Carmakers are showing faith in the future of the 4x4 with the only genuine new or concept vehicles at the show in the off-road department.

Start with the star of the show, the Land Rover Freelander, which will dominate the attention of thousands of visitors as the first all-new Land Rover for a decade since the launch of the immenseley successful Discovery. But Isuzu and Chrysler are giving us a glimpse of what is to come as we move into the second century of the motor car in Britain. And it is all depressingly familiar.

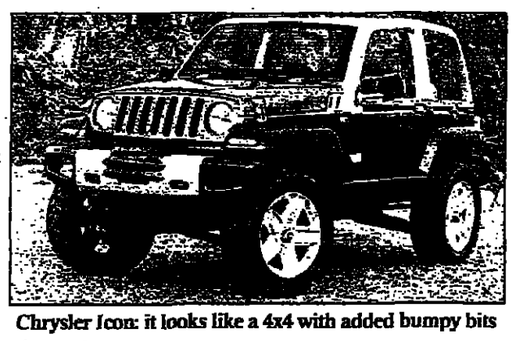
The Chrysler Icon is a reworking of the famous Wrangler; though, to be honest, it looks like a 4x4 with bumpy bits, something you would buy your 10-year-old son for Christmas, only scaled up for adults. Apparently, the vehicle has been "freshened", but you can bet a pound to a barrel of mud that this latest off-roader shares more than lookalike design gizmos with just about everything else coming on to the market.

Nothing new under the bonnet apparently, but one of the designers was inspired by a camper's backpack so the seats are made of exposed aluminium tubes with washable leather upholstery, another by mountain bikes. Rest assured though, you don't need to do any pedalling.

For those of you who enjoy bouncing around in fields (in a 4x4 that is), you will notice a plethora of these chunky-bumpered jobs coming to market as you consider your next purchase. An analogy featuring sheep and car designers springs to mind at this moment, though I can't think for the life of me why.



Vehi-CROSS: with aeration cavitation . . . whatever that is



Chrysler Icon: it looks like a 4x4 with added bumpy bits

Until studying pictures of the Isuzu, which will feature large on company's Earls Court stand. Designed by Englishman Simon Cox in his studio near Birmingham, the Vehi-CROSS (no explanation for the capital letters, and it is pronounced Vee-cross, so there) is already available in Japan, creating long waiting lists, according to Isuzu. This is a nation that thinks a poisonous fish is a delicacy.

However, the company wants to find out what the reaction would be here before attempting to sell the off-roader. The answer will probably be positive, though you will be wondering where the vehicle exhibits the sort of new technology we crave to enter our next century.

Well, the inevitable satellite navigation, a rear-mounted video camera that sends pictures up to the driver, and a stylised carbon fibre rev counter and speedometer plus a dial telling you what proportion of drive is being fed to which axle. All that to go the shops.

There is one thing, however. Come with me to the magical world of Isuzu suspension and I leave you here contemplating the forthcoming show with this description of the Vehi-CROSS's system, the first to use a "piggyback reservoir", ringing in your ears. This is the Brave New World: "When Vehi-CROSS encounters a bump, the road shock forces the gas and oil to be separated within the unit, giving enhanced damping characteristics by eliminating aeration cavitation."

Those interested in more details of aeration cavitation should ask the Isuzu representative on stand F6. Good luck.

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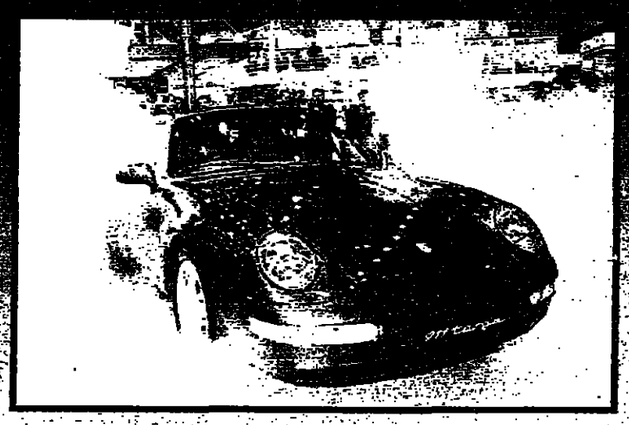

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We cannot have people being mown down in the streets just to preserve the profits of breweries or the lifestyles of people living in cottages

Towards a country of zero tolerance

DRIVEN TO DISTRACTION

Peter Barnard

There were 36,647 people at Anfield when Liverpool beat Chelsea last weekend, almost exactly the number of people whose lives are estimated to have been saved by the introduction of the drink-driving law 30 years ago. That anniversary, on Thursday, was a peg on which to hang all sorts of claims and counter-claims to do with the strengths and weaknesses of the existing law.

Neil Kinnock, the European Union Transport Commissioner, is among those who wants the limit reduced, and he also wants harmonisation across the EU. Baroness Hayman, the British minister with responsibility for road safety, is on record as favouring a reduction in the limit and *The Times* reported this week that the Government wants the limit reduced to the equivalent of one beer. Transport ministry officials were cagey when I spoke to them, saying only that the situation was "under review", a time-honoured Civil Service term meaning something is about to happen but we will tell you when we are good and ready. They do point out that the Kinnock option is in fact just a warming up of a draft directive produced by Brussels almost a decade ago.

The one-beer limit would probably mean reducing from 80mgs to 50mgs the level of alcohol allowed in the body. This is already the limit in Belgium, France, Holland and Portugal. Some other countries have higher limits, one or two allow no drinking at all. Mr Kinnock is sensible to seek a Europe-wide agreement, but of course the risk is of a Euro fudge. But the prospect of politicians being able to agree a single European currency without agreeing a single European drink-drive limit is the ultimate absurdity.

My own belief is that the limit might as well be reduced to zero, thus making a reality of Britain's long-running slogan: Don't drink and drive. That way we would all know where we stood. I sometimes drive after drinking a pint of beer, but it is undeniable that if two pints can impair one's ability to drive then one, or half, or a quarter, must also do so. The effect of alcohol is cumulative; it cuts in at a certain level.

There will be lots of opposition to a cut in the limit, but there was lots of opposition when Barbara Castle introduced the breath test 30 years ago. The main motoring organisations were against it. Breweries were against it. People living in rural areas said it would be the death of the country pub, which happens, 30 years later, to be one of the few rural businesses that is thriving.

I find the rural argument especially daft. Country dwellers say that further drink-drive restrictions interfere with their right to enjoy themselves, because there is little public transport in the country. Breweries bleat about loss of business. But we cannot have people being mown down in the streets just to preserve the profits of breweries or the lifestyles of people living in cottages.

When I lived in London I drank more than I do now that I live in a village. I drove less then, so I drank more. But most of us who drive cars have learnt to drink moderately, or even not at all, over the years. The estimated 1,200 lives a year saved by the drinking limit are testimony to the huge cultural change since the breath test was introduced. There remains a hard core of drunk drivers, but they are social lepers now.

In strict legal terms there is already a zero limit on drinking and driving in that the police are not limited by the breath test in the measures they can take. There is an offence of "driving whilst impaired", which can be brought whether or not a driver passes the breath test, its weakness being that impairment is notoriously difficult to prove.

So we are heading for a tougher limit. Will it stop the hardcore drunk drivers? This is the weakness, for the (mostly middle-aged) people who persist in drinking to excess before they drive are very hard to persuade. But at least they are getting older.

Alfa still faces quality barrier

ROAD TEST

THE FIRST and second gear changes were fine as I accelerated away in Alfa Romeo's new 156, *writes Alan Copps*. But changing up again, the gear knob came off in my hand and a spring from inside pinged across the cabin. A little later as I changed with the bare gear stick the gaiter and cover came away.

Not the kind of thing any manufacturer wants on a launch. Not so along such an incident might have been greeted with the comment "Well it is an Alfa ..." Die-hard enthusiasts for the marque were used to such foibles. But only minutes before Roberto Testori, chief executive of the Italian car firm, had been explaining how hard the company had worked to monitor quality control at its new factory near Naples.

To be fair, mine appeared to be an isolated incident among more than 1,000 journalists at the car's international launch. Embarrassed officials suggested it was the result of a rushed repair by a mechanic on the spot rather than a factory fault.

But it illustrates how hard Alfa has to work if it is going to pitch this car as a real rival to the BMW 3-Series. The will to mount such a challenge is clearly there and so is the raw material. The greatest virtue of the 156 is its handling, almost a match for the company's GTV coupé, and the styling is striking. Instruments are clear, controls near and much attention has been paid to safety. The engineers have combined Alfa's sporting style and reputation with comfort and quietness.

The big reservation must be about the interior. There's too much black plastic all over the dashboard and the plastic wood surround of the centre console looks simply tacky.

ALFA ROMEO 156
Engines: 1.8 Twin Spark producing 144bhp at 6,500rpm; 2-litre Twin Spark, 155bhp at 6,400rpm; 2.5-litre V6, 190bhp at 6,300rpm.
Performance: 1.8-litre 0-62mph 9.3 sec, 2-litre 8.6 sec, V6 7.3 sec. Top speed, 1.8-litre 130mph, 2-litre 135mph, 2.5-litre 140mph.

Interest rates set low

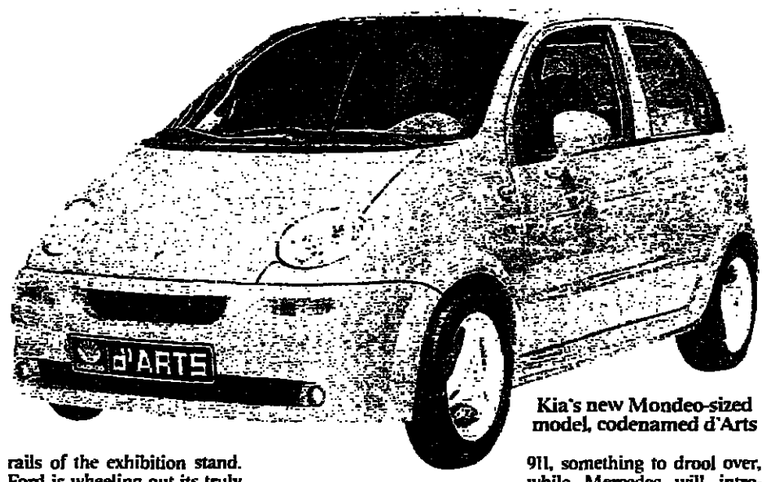
IF YOU are looking for spectacular entertainment, try the movies because new models at the London Motor Show are unlikely to keep the kids interested for long, *writes Kevin Eason*.

Important though they are, only enthusiasts will want to queue up to gawp at the latest VW Golf, Vauxhall Astra and Citroën Xsara. New, but definitely not high on sex appeal.

Land Rover brings the top goodies with the UK launch of the Freelander, not in showrooms until January, while Jaguar has its new V8-powered saloons — though you won't be able to tell that from just looking over the rails of the exhibition stand. Ford is wheeling out its truly entertaining MC2 concept, a coupé based on Mondeo mechanicals but with Dan Dare styling.

Shrugging off worries after the parent company went bust, Kia of South Korea is showing its new Mondeo-sized model, codenamed d'Arts, which it promises for release here next year.

Porsche is bringing the new 911, something to drool over, while Mercedes will introduce the only truly revolutionary car on show, the A-class, which redefines the small car. Not on sale until mid-1998, this is a glimpse of the world's most desired "baby" car.



Kia's new Mondeo-sized model, codenamed d'Arts

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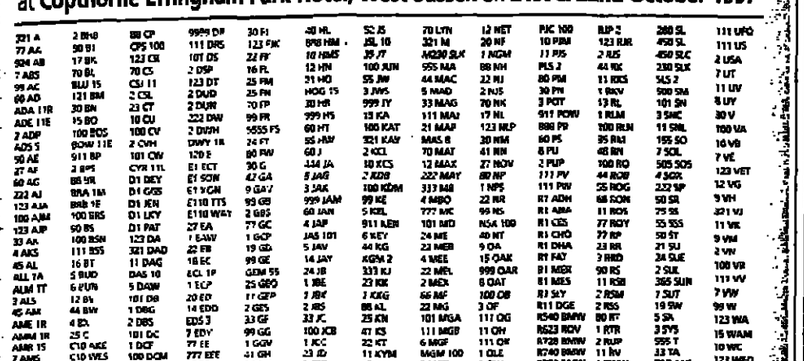

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Across Iran, and the heat is on

Lord Montagu and survivors reach the edge of Europe on the marathon Peking to Paris rally

Our arrival in Iran produced a total change of scene. All our female crew members had to cover up from *top to toe with shawls* over their heads, and we men were not allowed to wear shorts.

The drive out of Pakistan was through hauntingly remote desert — no place to break down — and temperatures soared (in old money, 112F in the shade). Once we crossed into Iran, we pounded vastly better roads through the Great Salt Desert, but cars *and crews endured blisteringly* unbearable heat. The friendly reception given out to all 24 nationalities, including our 30 Americans, was bettered by no other country so far. We get coupons for free fuel from the Iranian Motor Federation, and the back-up includes medical services and free garage servicing at all night halts.

Tony Fowkes and Tim Riley head up two teams of mechanics, with paramedics and a rally doctor, and have produced some truly remarkable feats of fettling which have transformed the rally and is perhaps the real reason why more than 80 of us survived the Himalayas.

Unlike modern rallying, there are no spare dumps or regular service halts to attend to our every need. But without Tony or Tim helping out, this event would be vastly different. Local workshops which have never seen a classic car find simple engineering much to their taste — so an Aston Martin has had two new axle shafts made from solid lumps of metal in Lahore, a Bentley has been plugged up with Opal Fruit sweets to stop a leaking fuel tank, and the yellow MG YB saloon has had the crank reground just three thousandths of an inch to fit Toyota's big end shelves.

When you read this, we will have enjoyed a day's rest in Istanbul. We crossed Iran from one side to the other to become the first motor rally to do this since the 1977 London-Sydney Marathon. After yet more fettling, we set out for the sting in the tail promised by a course right down the centre of Greece, over classic roads from the old Acropolis Rally.

Results of note? Francesca Sternberg and Jennifer Gillies in the PPP Welfare-sponsored Volvo have endured all sorts of problems, including days in Tibet with no springs or shock absorbers at the back at all, but they are smiling again now the car has all new suspension and are setting after two American girls in their Hillman Hunter. Rally leader is Phil Surtees in an amazing Jeep, who holds a four-minute lead over two Americans in a Ford Club Coupé of 1950, but there is a Cortina, a Hunter and even a Rolls-Royce Silver Dawn in the top ten and the final lap up through Europe could see many changes.

Most pleasing is the performance of cars given no hope of getting anywhere by the pundits at the start at the Great Wall of China. For example, all the vintage Bentleys, the British Racing Green looking very mud-stained and battle-weary now, are performing magnificently; never mind the top ten, their drivers never seem to stop grinning from ear to ear — whatever the fatigue thrown at them by this most amazing route.

Next Saturday we survivors pull up on the Place de la Concorde in the centre of Paris, just like Prince Borghese's drive in what became the world's first-ever rally in 1907.

Iranian drivers Ramin Khadem, left, and Mohsen Ijad

Morag Preston watches tomorrow's generation of race stars burn rubber at Monte Carlo

Kart track to Formula One

Jarno Trulli turned up two days in a row to watch the Monaco Cup, biggest of the karting championships and recognised breeding ground for Formula One.

Along with Ayrton Senna, David Coulthard, Johnny Herbert and Michael Schumacher, Trulli started his career in karts: "I owe everything to karting. Some of these kids will be the top drivers of the future."

Colin McRae, the former world rally champion, who lives a spanner's throw from the circuit in Monte Carlo, "wanted to know what all the bloody noise was about". But when he realised it was karting, he stopped for a closer look: "It's the same as Formula One, but on a smaller scale. It teaches you how to race."

> 'What I like is the speed and that feeling of pressure'

In the shadow of the casino, the Monaco Cup circuit is as tight as the grand prix track. Reaching 80mph, the championship is high-octane fuel for youthful ambition. The prize is only a token trophy, but it is the fast track to Formula One.

Among the world's top 40 karters invited to take part was Luke Hines, 15-year-old son of Martin, a name synonymous with karting. Three times world champion, Hines Snr now heads Hertfordshire-based manufacturers Zip Kart and looks after a promising team of British juniors, the Young Guns.

Last year, racing at junior level, Luke had come a valiant fifth. This year he was racing as a senior, competing against drivers up to 35 years old.

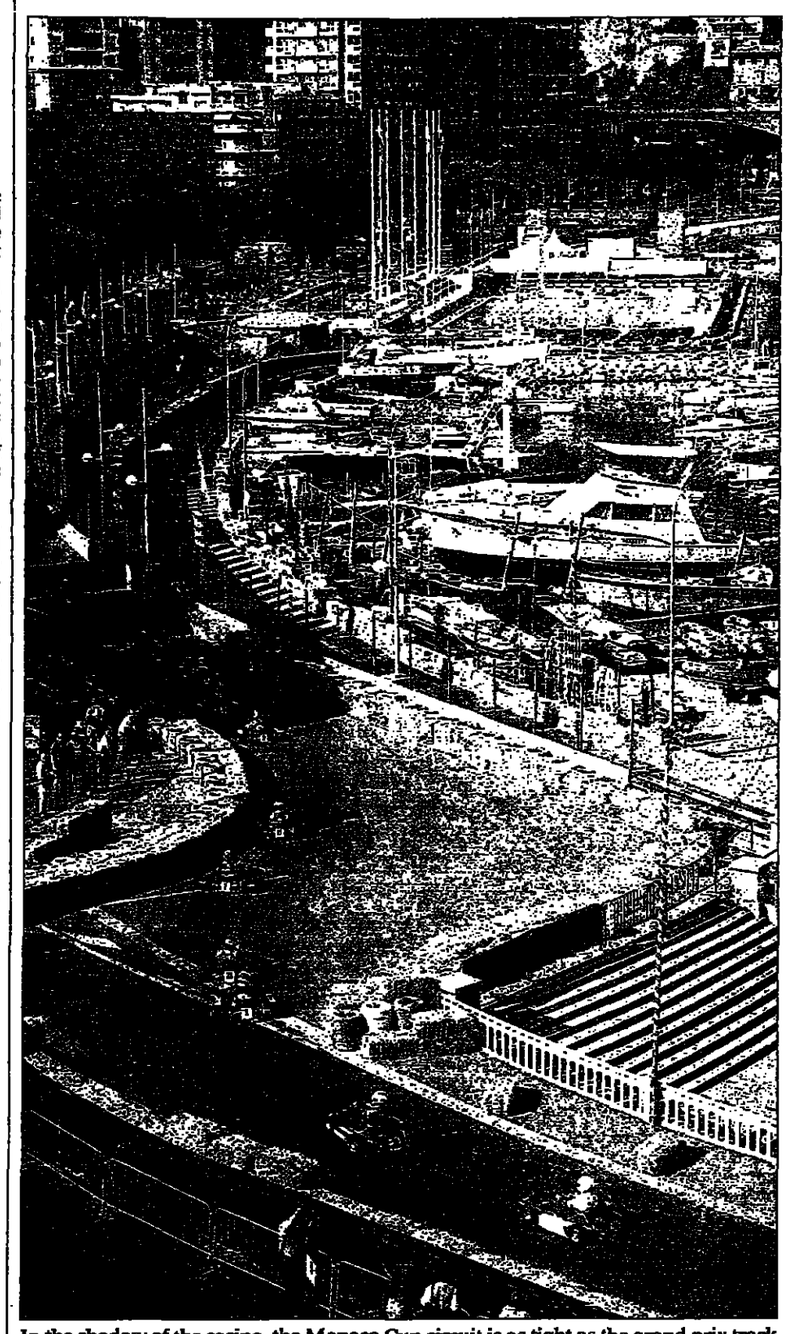
Unlike a lot of young chargers, who start competing as young as seven, Luke did not take up the sport until his ninth year, having spent the early part of his life in and out of hospital. Deaf until the age of four, he was run over by a tractor two years later and doctors feared he might never walk again. But after a series of operations, he recovered — only to be struck with ME. "Nothing has been easy in his life, but he knows that the worst is now over," says his father. "Whatever else happens is a bonus."

Long and lean, like his father, Luke uses a personal trainer to help strengthen his upper body. "What I like about karting is the speed and that feeling of being under pressure," he says. "I try to start with a clear head, and think about what I want to do — pass two people per lap."

But in the first heat, Luke nosedived into a four-kart pile-up; in the second, the chain snapped on his £3,000 kart. Angry and frustrated, he wandered head down into a corner with his father as they waited for the results to be posted. They knew already that he would be starting the pre-final at the back of the grid.

Meantime, their heats over, two British juniors were off for an afternoon's fishing. Michael Conway, 14, who started karting after his father spotted an advertisement in a local newspaper, ended up with second place in the final. His former team-mate Michael Spencer, 14, who came third overall, said: "Racing is the easy bit. It's waiting for the results that makes you nervous."

Watching from their yachts and the landmark swimming pool, the designer T-shirt and shorts crowd turned out for the final. Luke moved up from 33rd to 15th place and ended up ninth overall. The winner, was France's Martine Salignon — the next Prost?



In the shadow of the casino, the Monaco Cup circuit is as tight as the grand prix track

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Pacific Stnl	145.50	156.61	- 1.79	
Greater China	273.30	292.30	- 24.17	
Latin American	130.57	137.72	- 2.06	
Int Growth	167.93	258.67	0.70	
Balanced Except	161.60	167.30	+ 0.90	
Global Strategy	53.46	57.16	- 0.34	
AXA EQUITY & LAW UNIT TST MGRS				
01203 553 231				
General Acc	850.10	912.90	- 10.20	2.28
General Inc	699.30	744.00	- 8.30	3.18
UK Growth Acc	592.90	631.20	- 6.20	2.18
UK Growth Inc	375.40	399.40	- 9.50	2.18
Higher Inc Acc #	1057.30	1124.60	- 8.90	4.47
Higher Inc #	542.70	577.40	- 17.30	4.47
Gilts/Fixed Int Acc	229.20	243.80	- 2.30	6.52
Gilts/Fixed Int Inc	95.44	100.60	- 0.90	6.52
North America	455.30	484.40	- 0.10	
Europe	464.10	493.60	- 1.90	0.01
Pint Except	118.20	125.80	- 1.20	
Bnd Fndmnts Acc	144.30	153.50	- 0.90	4.26
Bnd Fndmnts Inc	92.59	98.50	- 0.93	4.26
Global Opps	120.30	128.00	- 1.50	
Balanced Acc	75.88	80.16	- 0.72	2.13
Balanced Inc	68.67	72.57	- 0.62	2.13
Japan Acc	40.41	42.99	- 0.01	
Far Eastn Acc	359.30	382.50	- 13.00	1.31
ABBEY UNIT TST MGRS				
0345 717 373				
GIP, & Fixed Int	141.10	149.70	- 1.20	6.09
High Inc Equity	223.30	238.60	- 2.30	4.22
Worldwide Bond	274.60	291.10	- 1.60	3.40
American Growth	544.60	581.50	+ 7.70	0.29
Asia Pacific	306.40	327.70	- 14.80	0.42
Assets & Earnings	348.10	372.30	- 4.50	2.57
Euro Capital Acc	249.70	267.10	- 3.60	0.75
Euro Inc	43.93	46.76	- 0.19	8.90
General	322.50	343.10	- 2.30	2.86
Global Opps	84.37	89.78	- 1.30	0.36
Japan	91.29	97.64	- 0.53	
Managed Inc	53.71	56.61†	- 0.31	5.91
Manufactured	195.30	208.90	- 2.10	1.46
US Emerging Cos	240.10	256.80†	- 7.10	
Ethical	89.99	95.73	+ 0.51	1.91
International	155.40	165.30	- 2.10	0.53
Portfolio & Growth	82.98	88.28	- 0.67	3.95
Global Cash & Sec	77.95	81.39	+ 0.30	7.43
Latin America	100.00	106.40	- 1.80	0.63
Capital Reserve	152.10	152.20	0.20	4.59
ABBEY NATIONAL UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0141 275 8500				
NSP UK Growth	114.50	121.80	- 0.90	1.94
Equity Income #	159.70	169.80†	- 1.20	3.91
Extra Income #	301.10	320.10†	- 1.50	6.35
Smaller Cos	106.70	113.50†	- 0.60	2.42
International	136.40	145.10	- 2.00	1.24
ABERDEEN UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0800 833 580				
American	62.30	65.54†	+ 0.29	
Emerging Mkts	17.94	81.19	- 0.76	0.11
European	180.97	188.21	- 1.72	
Extra Income #	58.25	61.31†	- 0.03	4.94
Far East Emg Eqn	109.17	114.50	- 0.62	0.73
Fixed Interest #	28.32	29.84	+ 0.12	7.93
Fund Inv Fac #	176.32	185.70†	+ 2.50	3.92
Japan	133.53	140.29	- 1.05	
Latin American	84.55	88.67	- 1.22	
Pacific	75.31	79.36†	- 1.35	0.24
Property	94.38	99.09	- 5.83	1.29
UK Emerging Cos	70.63	75.30	- 0.56	0.84
UK Growth	69.81	72.72†	- 0.35	1.19
Aber World Port #	95.06	100.06	- 0.15	2.56
Ethical	87.63	91.13	+ 0.65	0.78
Aberdeen Gilt Inc #	50.70	50.70†	- 0.25	6.37
ABERFORTH UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0131 220 0733				
UK Small Cos	2566.00	2679.00	+46.00	
ABWAYS UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
0171 256 5868				
Retail Property #	109.60	116.50		4.87
ALLCHURCHES INV MGMT SVS LTD				
01452 305 356				
Amply Income	108.01	115.66†	+ 0.62	1.81
Income Builder Inc	99.35	105.69	+ 0.59	3.32
For Alfd Dunbar see Throgmorton				
B & C E UNIT TRUST MGMT LTD				
01293 525 911				
Cntrbtd Dvt Perc	143.60	153.10		
Franklin Perm Perc	84.45	87.74		
BAILLIE GIFFORD & CO LTD				
0131 222 4242				
America	481.90	512.40†	+ 2.10	
Bond	123.20	129.50†	+ 0.10	6.43
Bdt Smlr Cos	118.60	126.20	+ 1.90	1.90
Europe	371.80	395.80	- 13.00	
Euro Smlr Cos	135.90	144.70	- 1.30	0.21
High Income #	70.02	74.49	- 0.21	5.43
Japan	322.60	341.90†	- 5.60	
Latin American	127.00	135.10	- 2.10	
Pacific	110.40	117.40	- 5.60	0.80
UK Smlr Cos	65.24	69.40	+ 0.50	1.29
Japan Fd	555.80	573.80	+13.00	
Mngd Fd	346.20	361.60†	- 3.60	2.42
BANK OF IRELAND FUND MGRS LTD				
0171 489 8873				
Brit & Overs	450.10	476.00	- 1.90	0.74
Capital Gwth	169.30	179.10	- 2.30	2.34
Worldw Opps	250.40	264.80	- 1.90	0.82
BARCLAYS FUNDS LTD				
Customer Help Desk 0181 522 4000				
Income Funds				
Cash	100.20	100.20†	+ 0.10	6.53
Cash Acc	129.90	129.90	+ 0.10	6.53
Income #	219.30	267.30	- 6.50	3.97
Income Builder #	82.53	87.89†	- 0.65	4.96
Intl Income	87.79	93.39	- 1.39	1.33
Balanced Funds				
Exempt	107.40	114.20	- 1.30	2.06
Sov	531.40	571.40†	+ 6.30	1.92
General	408.50	434.50†	- 5.00	1.37
Property	271.20	291.90	+ 3.10	5.46
Tracker	288.20	306.80	- 4.20	1.56
Growth Funds - UK				
Capital	182.40	194.00	- 2.20	1.45
FTSE 100	133.30	141.50	- 2.70	1.77
Growth Acc	576.30	613.10	- 9.90	1.45
Smaller Cos	62.31	66.47	+ 1.09	2.20
Smaller Cos Acc	75.05	80.05	+ 1.31	2.20
Growth Funds - Overseas				
America	238.50	252.10	+ 0.60	0.09
American Growth	164.40	174.70	+ 0.50	
Japan	115.70	122.30	+ 1.10	
Japan Acc	117.00	123.70	+ 1.10	
Japan Spec Sits	53.32	56.48	- 0.61	
Worldwide	238.00	242.00	- 3.20	0.74
Barclays Investment Portfolios				
Managed Income #		50.00		
Mgd Gwth & Inc #		50.00		
Managed Growth #		50.00		
BARING FUND MANGERS LTD				
0171 214 1004				
American Growth	184.70	194.50		
Amer Smlr Cos	194.60	206.40	+ 2.60	
Eastern	255.10	270.40	- 9.90	0.38
Equity Income #	129.90	133.90	+ 0.30	4.00
European Growth	504.80	537.00	- 5.80	0.80
Europe	463.50	495.40	- 0.10	0.60
German Growth	111.00	120.70	+ 0.60	0.50
Global Bond	74.53	78.53	- 0.64	4.60
Global Growth	180.10	191.10	- 1.60	0.40
Japan Growth	140.90	149.40	- 2.00	
Japan Smaller	99.95	105.40	+ 0.10	
Latin Amer	44.81	47.90	- 2.51	
Portfolio	179.30	191.90	- 1.40	2.00
Pacific Asia	346.10	368.80	- 2.60	2.00
UK Growth	133.10	142.20	- 0.60	3.00
UK Smaller Cos	221.90	229.90	+ 2.70	1.90
Select Managers	100.20	107.20	0.70	1.00
BLACKSTONE FRANKS UT MGRS LTD				
0171 256 5300				
Intl Gwth Port Inc	110.50	117.60	- 1.30	
Special Oppor Inc	74.94	79.72	- 1.83	
BRITANNIA FUND MGRS LTD				
0141 223 6020				
Balanced Growth	187.86	188.54†	- 5.51	0.95
-do- Accum	215.22	224.19	- 6.52	0.95
Smaller Cos	182.37	189.57	+ 1.06	0.44
Higher Yield #	70.24	73.17†	- 0.67	3.53
American Gth Inc	144.31	150.32	+ 1.72	
European Growth	208.55	217.54†	- 3.36	
-do- Accum	213.30	222.19	- 3.43	
Mngd Pfolio Inc	63.83	66.49†	- 0.96	1.22
-do- Accum	66.69	69.68	- 0.93	1.22
Int Spec Opps	209.53	219.00	- 2.29	
Pacific Gth	144.85	150.90	- 12.67	
UK General #	124.49	129.67	- 2.50	2.60
-do- Accum #	137.09	142.80	- 3.07	2.60
Japan	48.73	50.76	+ 0.60	
Gtr & Fixed Int #	128.56	112.49†	- 0.79	7.30
BURRAGE UNIT TST MGMT LTD				
0171 480 7218				
Short Dated Gilt	65.91	66.75	- 0.29	5.25
CIS UNIT MANAGERS LTD				
0161 837 5050				
Environ	215.48	226.80	+ 0.10	1.52
UK Growth	370.50	384.70	- 3.70	1.45
UK Income	183.00	192.60†	- 2.50	3.99
CANADA LIFE MGMT (Uts) LTD				
01707 822 100				
Can Gen Dist	284.10	301.10	- 3.00	1.13
-do- Income Dist	158.57	168.00	- 0.40	3.01
-do- Accum	537.40	569.00	- 1.30	3.01
Gilt & Fixd Int	43.02	45.29†	- 0.14	5.69
Growth Unit	337.30	354.90†	- 1.60	1.65
Bond	185.30	192.90†	- 1.40	5.60
Intl Growth	258.70	273.10	- 2.40	0.27
North American	331.40	352.10	+ 1.90	
Far East	367.30	388.60	- 8.60	0.76
UK Smaller Cos	257.60	276.70	+ 4.90	1.06
European	118.70	126.30	- 2.70	0.95
Income Growth	37.56	39.78	+ 0.12	
High Income	273.70	292.10†	- 1.00	3.47
CAPEL-CURE MYERS UT MGMT LTD				
0161 831 7433 Eng 0161 831 7433 Dlg 0161 831 7455				
American & Gen	296.80	312.70†	- 2.70	
European Inc	124.70	132.60	- 1.80	0.03
Smaller Cos (C-M)	118.50	116.00†	- 1.20	1.74
Growth	688.90	732.90†	- 1.70	0.03
Income & Growth #	581.50	618.70	- 1.70	4.11
-do- Accum #	908.40	966.00	- 2.60	4.11
Japan & Gen	59.70	63.27	- 0.78	
Hallmark Cash	1508.00	1571.00†	- 11.00	1.48
-do- Accum	1894.00	1973.00	- 13.00	1.48
Special Sits	158.50	168.70	- 0.40	1.69
High Yield	1891.00	1950.00	- 6.00	3.60
CAZENOVE UNIT TRUST MGMT LTD				
0171 606 0700				
Cazenove Portfolio	117.21	124.76	- 0.68	2.29
American Portfolio	166.01	175.87	- 2.48	0.68
European Portfolio	170.54	181.66†	- 2.34	0.38
High Income	59.59	58.61	- 0.53	6.46
Japanese Portfolio	96.99	98.22†	- 0.30	
Pacific Portfolio	147.75	158.34	- 3.29	0.76
UK Equity	115.37	123.14†	- 0.86	2.69
UK Equity & Bd	67.77	71.92	- 0.75	4.68
UK Smlr Cos	55.21	59.27†	- 1.18	1.62
CBF CHURCH OF ENGLAND FUNDS				
0171 588 1815				
Inv Fd Inc	966.43	980.09	+14.84	3.54
Inv Fd Acc	997.50	1002.42	+17.00	

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
Fed Int Sec Inc	166.07	166.73	+ 1.95	6.58
Fed Int Sec Acc	173.59	174.29	+ 1.95	
CDF CHARITY FUNDS				
0171 589 1815				
Investment Inc	945.20	996.48	+23.37	3.63
Investment Acc	4542.61	4811.27	+153.98	
Fixed Int Inc	135.29	133.85	- 0.98	5.67
Fixed Int Acc	284.81	365.87	+ 3.76	
CITY FINANCIAL UT MGRS LTD				
0171 956 0600				
Jackson Intl	96.49	101.36†	+ 1.48	4.94
Tech Bio-Tech	45.75	50.49	- 1.96	
Young Ethical Tst	320.99	322.06	+ 0.98	0.39
Gtr Fin Assets	92.60	97.24†	- 0.98	2.73
City Fin Intl	98.37	103.30	+ 0.70	0.05
Fmrly Nov Cap	372.06	385.83	+ 4.48	1.56
Buckley Yield Gilts	156.71	168.23†	+ 2.92	
Thom UtdEd	60.37	64.15	0.37	4.14
CITY OF LONDON UNIT TST MGRS LTD				
0171 711 0171 Admin: 01277 227 300				
Emerging Markets	54.01	62.95	- 1.13	
CLERICAL MEDICAL UT MGRS LTD				
0345 72 2333				
American Gwth	103.23	109.99	+ 0.15	
Dragon Growth	64.24	68.70	+ 2.35	0.66
Equity High Inc	114.82	121.50†	- 0.41	3.20
-do- Accum	172.38	182.41	- 0.61	3.33
Extra Income Inc	28.51	30.00†	0.18	6.20
Extra Income Acc	33.14	34.88	- 0.20	6.20
European Gwth	84.77	89.70	- 1.18	0.07
Evergreen	37.31	39.90	- 0.16	
General Equity	134.58	142.04	- 0.86	2.39
Japan Growth	39.84	42.38	- 0.22	
Pathfinder Gwth	81.21	85.93	+ 0.36	1.84
Pref Sm Cos Inc	42.45	44.92	+ 0.21	1.42
-do- Accum	45.46	48.11	+ 0.44	
Retirement Inc #	34.46	36.46	- 0.09	5.13
Spritual Sits	56.80	59.78	+ 0.32	2.01
UK & Overseas	72.77	77.01	- 0.92	0.93
COLONIAL UNIT TRUSTS (RA) LTD				
01634 898 000				
Balanced	82.55	85.98	- 0.52	3.68
Capital	102.51	106.57	- 0.76	1.87
High Income	56.27	58.61	- 0.38	6.43
Top 50	73.40	76.45	- 0.77	1.91
COMMERCIAL UNION TRUST MGRS LTD				
0181 686 9818				
PRESTIGE PORTFOLIO (PPT FUNDS)				
Income Funds				
Equity Inc	225.97	235.41†	+ 0.82	4.10
Long Gilt	49.42	51.47†	- 0.43	5.30
Monthly Inc Plan	57.22	59.61†	- 0.12	7.52
Preference Share	54.05	56.29†	- 0.11	6.93
Balanced Funds				
High Yield	163.72	170.56†	+ 0.30	5.25
Managed Fund	87.73	91.41†	- 0.54	2.47
UK Growth Funds				
Smaller Cos	53.73	55.97	- 1.00	1.52
-do- Accum	64.25	66.93	+ 1.18	1.52
UK & General	124.36	129.56†	- 0.55	2.17
-do- Accum	166.55	173.51†	- 0.73	2.17
UK Growth	247.77	258.12	- 0.79	1.52
International Growth Funds				
Europe Growth	275.43	286.94	- 5.49	0.47
Far Eastern Gth	113.27	120.42	- 4.33	0.32
Global Bond	73.85	76.93†	- 0.47	6.88
Japan Growth	102.69	106.98	- 0.61	
North Amer Gwth	154.40	160.90	+ 2.36	
Universal Growth	77.93	81.19	- 2.25	0.60
Worldwide Growth	96.84	90.47	+ 0.31	0.29
OTHER CU TRUSTS (NON PPT FUNDS)				
Deposit Fund	91.56	91.56†	+ 0.05	6.28
Homemaker Fund	106.26	113.08	- 0.76	1.91
Quilter Fund	193.01	194.69	- 1.92	1.62
CONSISTENT UNIT TST MGMT CO LTD				
0171 407 5996				
Consistent UT	41.96	44.54	- 0.14	2.78
COOKE (HENRY) INV FUNDS LTD				
0800 526 368				
Growth	189.90	212.70	- 1.10	2.01
Income	88.70	93.53	- 0.45	3.85
European Growth	95.33	101.45	- 1.78	0.11
Recovery	200.50	213.30	- 1.70	1.90
CO-OP PENSION FDS UT MGRS LTD				
0171 283 9494				
Equity Dist	1244.30	1264.50		3.03
CREDIT SUISSE INV FDS (UK) LTD				
01277 690 370				
Eurobrain Inc	87.54	92.92	- 2.10	0.94
Fellowship Fd	120.50	128.10†	+ 1.10	1.14
Income #	345.60	367.60	- 1.00	3.74
-do- Accum #	939.80	999.00	- 3.00	3.74
Smaller Cos	337.60	352.70	+ 3.20	0.73
-do- Accum	295.60	315.70	+ 3.00	0.73
Intl Portfolio	116.30	125.60	+ 0.10	1.36
High Inc Port #	101.00	107.40	- 0.30	3.83
DIVERSIGNAL TST MGMT LTD				
0171 470 1634				
Global Sm Cos	1986.30	1984.60	+11.70	0.52
UK Small Cos	2351.50	2445.80	+30.60	2.81
DISCRETIONARY UNIT FUND MGRS				
0171 377 8619				
Dist Inc	258.80	266.80	+ 2.60	
EAGLE STAR UNIT MGRS LTD				
01242 577 555				
UK Balanced Inc	216.10	229.80	- 2.20	1.41
UK High Inc Inc	237.90	246.70	- 2.00	3.05
-do- Accum	323.30	343.90	- 2.90	3.05
UK Prof & Fl Inc	64.30	68.77	- 0.73	5.38
Government Opps	130.10	138.20	- 0.50	0.72
UK Spit Cos	77.54	82.48	+ 1.28	0.62
Extra Income Inc	54.29	57.73	- 0.43	6.50
EDINBURGH UNIT TST MGRS LTD				
0345 090 526				
Convertibles #	25.18	26.75†	- 0.05	5.23
Enterprise	123.70	131.10	+ 0.80	1.91
Equity Income #	174.70	185.60†	- 2.50	3.45
European	77.23	81.87	- 2.37	
Financial	73.34	78.96†	- 0.96	1.30
Growth & Inc #	357.90	380.30	- 4.40	2.90
High Dist #	224.40	238.40	- 2.60	3.57
International	484.60	493.60	14.00	0.30
Int Cap Inc	126.60	135.10†	- 3.30	2.00
Latin American	44.33	47.10	- 1.10	
Mngd Cash Port	102.40	107.00	- 1.30	0.65
Pacific	82.27	87.41†	- 3.00	
Prof High Inc	29.76	26.84†	- 0.26	6.71
Tokyo	181.90	192.30†	+ 1.30	
UK Smaller Cos	257.70	273.80†	- 4.80	1.10
Japan Sm Cos	293.60	311.10	+ 5.50	
Nth Amer	560.80	593.00	+ 1.80	0.49
UK Inc & Grth	319.30	340.10†	- 5.30	2.18
ELY PLACE UNIT MGRS LTD				
0171 242 0242				
BM Director Dlgs	129.17	137.57	- 0.15	0.94
Growth Acc	332.16	353.78	+ 4.39	0.19
Income	653.08	696.42		5.61
ENDURANCE FUND MGMT LTD				
0171 373 7281				
Endurance Fd	262.50	279.30	- 2.40	0.00
EQUITABLE UNIT TRUST MGRS LTD				
01296 431 480				
European	116.45	122.58	- 4.34	1.42
Ethics Tst	58.08	61.14	+ 0.30	0.67
Far Eastern	290.35	295.11	- 2.80	1.49
High Income	175.15	184.37	- 2.07	3.95
UK Index Trckng	67.33	70.87	- 1.59	2.37
Intl Growth	157.37	165.65	- 0.88	1.14
North American	196.90	207.26	- 2.40	1.31
Pacific	180.93	190.45†	- 6.31	2.50
Smaller Cos	75.93	79.93	- 1.14	2.05
Special Sits	91.87	96.64†	+ 0.26	2.99
Tst of Inv Tsts	245.62	258.55	- 1.41	1.47
EXETER FUND MANAGERS LTD				
01392 412 144				
Capital Growth	134.96	142.06†	+ 0.86	
Fd of Inv Tsts	60.80	64.00	- 0.06	0.45
High Income #	42.40	44.96†	- 0.42	11.12
Stock & Gil Opps	55.45	59.62†	+ 0.05	
Zero Preference	48.90	51.88	+ 0.32	
FAMILY INVESTMENT MGMT LTD				
01273 220 707				
Family Accel Inc	119.70	127.30†	- 0.90	2.01
Uckfield Chambles	344.30	366.20†	+ 1.70	2.37
FIDELITY INVESTMENT SERVS LTD				
Callbrke: Private Clients. 0800 414 181				
Cash Fund				
Cash Fund	100.00	100.00		6.50
Bond Funds				
Intl Bond	27.06	28.85	0.14	5.21
Strategic Inc	30.04	31.40	- 0.24	5.41
Income Funds				
High Income	31.44	33.01†	- 0.21	4.67
Income Plus	171.30	182.20†	- 0.50	3.29
European Income	63.67	67.63	- 0.95	1.66
Unpbroker Gwth	39.91	40.30†	- 0.35	2.08
Equity Funds				
ASEAN	38.27	40.83	+ 1.11	
American	445.30	473.00	+ 6.10	
Amer Smlr Cos	265.50	282.70	+ 6.40	
Japan Smaller Cos	22.17	23.53	+ 0.62	
European	307.40	326.90†	- 2.71	
European Opps	110.90	117.40	- 2.00	0.48
Global Pos	40.33	42.89	- 0.27	0.38
UK Growth	154.00	163.80	- 0.20	1.19
Growth & Inc	226.10	240.50	- 2.00	1.99
Intl FEP	67.79	65.70	+ 0.45	1.05
Japan Spec Sits	74.16	78.65	+ 1.75	
Japan	181.30	192.00	+ 1.00	
Managed Intl	455.00	483.10	- 2.40	0.95
Worldwide Plus	80.56	81.52	+ 0.08	0.32
Recovery	73.34	77.98	+ 1.13	1.75
South E Asia	193.10	205.70†	- 7.50	0.54
Special Sits	889.80	946.10†	+ 4.50	1.19
Sterling Funds				
Cash Accum Units	121.44	121.44	+ 0.11	6.50
FLEMING PRIVATE FUND MGMT LTD				
0171 374 2700				
Balanced #	178.00	180.00†	+ 1.80	1.53
Fleming Pfl Inc #	107.70	110.00†	- 0.70	3.97
Cap Pfolio	199.00	209.70	- 1.30	0.03
General Opps	174.00	175.40	+ 2.20	3.84
Growth Inc	47.27	49.08	0.10	1.54
Private Portfolio	593.40	609.50†	+12.40	1.03
FOREIGN & COLONIAL UNT MGT				
Dlg 01277 690 395 Admin/Ret 01277 680 350				
Euro Smlr Cos Inc	178.00	189.10	- 4.20	
High Income	24.17	25.69†	- 0.18	8.75
Japan Smlr Cos	13.97	14.96†	+ 0.12	
US Smaller Cos	572.80	608.29†	+13.90	
FRAMLINGTON UNT MGMT LTD				
Eng 0171 330 6500 Dealing 0345 775611				
American Growth	108.70	115.20	+ 1.40	
-do- Accum	108.70	115.20	+ 1.40	
Asia Smlr Cos	838.20	890.70†	+ 0.10	
-do- Accum	856.30	910.00†	- 0.10	
Capital Tst	423.60	450.00†	+ 7.40	1.26
-do- Accum	630.40	670.00†	- 10.50	1.26
Cont Smlr Cos	70.04	74.74	+ 0.05	1.03
-do- Accum	75.15	80.20	+ 0.06	1.03
Convertible	152.30	161.27	+ 1.30	5.32
-do- Accum	347.20	365.10	+ 2.90	5.38
Emerging Markets	78.63	84.01	- 2.40	0.54
-do- Accum	79.25	84.67	- 2.42	0.54
European	196.60	208.20	- 2.90	0.40
-do- Accum	209.00	221.40	- 3.00	0.40
Extra Income	489.30	520.50	+ 2.70	2.99
-do- Accum	806.00	857.40	+ 4.30	3.99
Financial	241.40	256.80	- 2.70	0.34
-do- Accum	258.60	275.10	- 2.90	0.04
Gilt Intrd	63.15	65.11	- 0.62	7.04
-do- Accum	104.00	107.20†	- 1.00	7.04
Health Fund Inc	318.30	340.70	- 4.40	
-do- Accum	318.30	340.70	- 4.41	
Income & Growth	283.60	301.70	- 0.20	3.54
-do- Accum	454.00	483.60	- 0.40	3.54
Intl Growth	500.60	533.20	- 5.60	
-do- Accum	559.90	592.30	- 2.00	
Japan & Gen	151.10	160.40	- 1.40	
-do- Accum	152.60	162.00	- 1.40	
Monthly Inc #	243.60	259.30†	- 0.40	4.76
-do- Accum #	252.80	268.90†	+ 0.40	4.76
Managed Port Inc	142.00	149.50	+ 1.70	1.20
-do- Accum	156.10	164.30	+ 1.80	1.20
Quarterly Income #	66.90	71.50	+ 0.54	5.17
-do- Accum #	80.40	85.92	+ 0.63	5.17
Recovery	353.70	378.30	- 0.60	
-do- Accum	417.50	446.50	1.10	
UK Growth	80.19	85.31	0.71	1.79
-do- Accum	88.63	94.28	0.79	1.79
FRIENDS PROVIDENT UNIT TRUSTS				
Dealing 01722 715855 Eng 01722 715834				
FP Ambrose	81.75	86.45	+ 0.22	
FP Am Smlr Cos	249.60	266.30	+ 1.70	
FP Asian Growth	246.70	263.10	- 5.20	
FP Australian	486.20	517.50	- 12.60	

	Sell	Buy	Wkly +/-	Yld %
FP Equity Dist	570.00	608.00	- 7.90	1.88
-do- Accum	1286.00	1371.00	- 17.00	1.88
FP Euro Gtr	398.50	414.40	- 6.60	
-do- Accum	425.70	454.00	- 7.20	
FP Intl Bond	57.59	60.93	0.62	4.06
FP Intl Gilt Dist	45.62	48.66	- 0.50	
-do-

هكذا من الإصل

BLAST FROM PAST 56

Millions may clamour for a return to Serps

WEEKEND MONEY

BITTER PILL 53

Rising cost of private medical care

Temptations of sterling's giddy rise

Patrick Collinson looks at the pitfalls lying in wait for an inexperienced foreign currency speculator

Sliding scale: buying francs now to pay for February's skiing holiday may make sense but there are risks to do-it-yourself currency speculation

The average cost of a beer in a Majorca bar in 1996 was £1.30, but this summer it had fallen to just 80p, according to a price check by Thomas Cook. Car hire is down in price from £154.25 to £101.50, while suntan lotion is just £3.65, compared with £5.05 a year ago.

The reason is sterling's phenomenal post-election surge. Sterling's giddy rise — and a widespread belief that it has overshot in value — has tempted a lot of people to consider seriously doing a little amateur currency speculation.

Although the experts agree that sterling remains overvalued — so buying French francs now for February's skiing holiday may make sense — they shudder at the thought of stay-at-home investors attempting to play the currency markets.

For example, an investor might exchange £1,000 into marks at the current rate of around DM2.86 to the pound in the expectation of sterling entering the euro at the rate of DM2.65 in a couple of years' time. Even if such a fall in the pound occurs, switching the marks back into pounds would give the investor a profit of just £79. After subtracting foreign exchange charges and the interest that the money would otherwise have earned the profit all but disappears.

A more serious investor could open a foreign currency account at a bank, which will pay a rate of interest depending on the currency. Lloyds Bank, for example, offers personal currency accounts in all currencies at a standing charge of £60 per year plus banking charges for cash and cheques paid in or out.

Flemings and other fund managers also offer deposit-style accounts, which pay the interest rate applicable to the local currency. But a glance at the interest rate paid by Flemings on foreign currency deposit reveals that sterling, at 5.1 per cent, is far higher than for any other major currency. Leaving money in marks earns an interest rate of only 1.5 per cent.

Remember, to gain from putting money into a foreign currency deposit, sterling has to weaken against the currency. If sterling strengthens, then the investor can suffer a double whammy, losing out when the money is translated back into sterling and missing out on higher UK rates.

An alternative to opening a foreign currency account is to invest in a currency fund, either on a single currency or mixed (managed) currency basis. Several of the major investment houses offer currency funds, which tend to be based in offshore centres such as Jersey, Guernsey, Bermuda and Luxembourg.

But far from offering high-risk, high-reward speculative funds, the investment managers promote currency funds to investors as a means to reduce and diversify risk.

Fidelity, for example, offers a range of 13 single currency funds but is very keen to discourage small investors from using them for speculation. It focuses instead on the tax benefits of, say, using a currency fund to save for retirement abroad.

Income in an offshore currency fund such as Fidelity's Bermuda funds is rolled up tax-free, and UK investors are not liable for income tax until shares are switched or sold. If the investor sells shares after leaving the UK for retirement on the Costa del Sol, the gains will be exempt from UK tax.

Closer to the idea of making money by dealing in currencies is the managed currency fund, which actively invests in a wide range of currencies to maximise gains from both currency movements and interest rates over the medium term. But don't expect George Soros-style returns.

Mr Soros made more than £1 billion speculating against sterling as it was ejected from the ERM, but Rothschild Asset Management and Guinness Flight Hambro, both large players in the managed currency fund field, emphasise the importance of longer-term investing.

Philip Saunders, of Guinness Flight, says: "A lot of people think of currency dealing in terms of a frenetic City dealing room. But currency funds should really be seen as super-cash funds and as part of a balance of assets across bonds and equities. A managed currency fund aims to preserve the value of your cash in foreign currencies and is generally less volatile than bond or equity funds."

Tom Barman, the Rothschild money fund manager, said: "We take a conservative approach and don't manage on a short-term basis. Investors could trade in and out of our funds to maximise returns, but it is not something we recommend."

FUND MANAGERS' FORECASTS

WILL sterling continue to edge down from its peaks, or is it preparing to surge forward again? Weekend Money asked Rothschild Asset Management and Guinness Flight, the currency fund managers, for their forecasts for the major trading currencies.

■ **STERLING**

Guinness Flight: In the medium term sterling is overvalued and is likely to fall. The high interest rate differential between sterling and other currencies has made it attractive, but as this unwinds (as interest rates rise elsewhere) sterling will weaken further.

Rothschild: Our main message is that the sharp appreciation of sterling after the election was a significant overshoot from fair value. But we don't expect sterling's decline to be as dramatic as its rise.

■ **US DOLLAR**

Guinness Flight: We expect near-term weakness of the dollar against European currencies, although not against sterling. It is now overbought — the US is still the world's biggest debtor nation and has a huge current account deficit.

Rothschild: We expect sterling to continue to trade against the dollar in the $1.55 to $1.65 region for the next few months. It will probably weaken to between $1.45 and $1.55 over the next year.

■ **MARK**

Guinness Flight: The mark has strengthened recently. We expect it to continue to strengthen against the dollar and the yen. In the longer term, a slow-growth, low-interest rate Europe is not supportive of the currency.

Rothschild: We expect more convergence trading as European monetary union approaches. Against the mark and other core European currencies, the pound is fundamentally overvalued.

■ **YEN**

Guinness Flight: After a strong rally, the yen is flat on its back again. It is a cheap currency, but until the economy shows signs of a sustained recovery, it will remain soft.

Rothschild: The yen has been trading against sterling at around 195 to 205 to the pound, and we expect it to appreciate. The rate against sterling could come back to around 175.

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Jill Insley looks at a high-yield corporate bond fund and its research-orientated manager

Newton's new high-flyer

HIT OR MISS

Warren Buffett's spectacular move of $2 billion from shares into bonds two weeks ago has encouraged many investors to wonder if they should follow suit. As the UK stock market suffered another week of volatility an increasing number of City pundits believe it is time to take profits and switch into steadier areas of investment.

Newton, the fund manager, is no doubt hoping to cash in on this sentiment by launching a new corporate bond fund — the High Yield Bond unit trust.

The fund is designed for income seekers, paying an initial yield of 7.6 per cent gross in monthly instalments. After launch, the yield will be variable, but Newton aims to produce a yield 1 per cent to 1.5 per cent greater than that of ten-year gilts. The High Yield Bond fund also qualifies for inclusion in a personal equity plan, so the interest will be paid out tax-free.

The High Yield Bond fund will be managed by Helena Morrissey, who has worked in the bond markets for ten years, starting her career at Schroders in New York three days before the 1987 crash.

Since her move to Newton in London, she has managed the Newton International Bond Fund, which has top quartile performance over one, three and five years in the international fixed interest sector.

Independent financial advisers agree that the fund's 4 per cent initial charge and 1 per cent annual charge are reasonable. The annual charge will be taken from capital, so as to maximise the income that can be paid out to investors.

However, Graham Hooper of Chase de Vere Investments is worried about the fund's investment content. Newton claims this is the first UK-based corporate bond fund to invest in European and UK high yield corporate debt. Junk bonds is a more familiar name.

Corporate bonds are "IOUs" issued by companies that want to raise money without borrowing from a bank. The company usually promises to repay the borrowed money — investors' capital — on a set date, and in the meantime pays regular fixed amounts of interest.

Helena Morrissey aims for a portfolio of 50 bond holdings with a 2 per cent limit in any one

The quality of a bond is determined by many factors. These include the amount of interest it pays, whether it is backed with some sort of asset such as property, and perhaps most importantly the company's ability to repay its debt.

Moodys and Standard & Poor's, the rating agencies, specialise in assessing the ability of companies to repay their bonds. The "safest" bonds are given an AAA rating. However, these are few and far between, and many corporate bond Peps buy AA or A-rated bonds.

But Mrs Morrissey says that to generate the desired yield she must invest half the fund's money in bonds, which have a BB rating or less. Such bonds are classed as "sub-investment grade", because the rating agencies believe there is a higher risk of the companies that have issued the bonds defaulting on their debts. The market in this type of bond is still in its infancy in Europe, although well-established in the US.

Higher risk bonds cost less to buy and tend to pay higher rates of interest to attract investors. For example, the fund's portfolio currently includes a £65 million unrated bond issued by Eco-Bat Technologies, a small UK company that recycles lead. It has issued a ten-year bond that pays 2 per cent more than the going rate for ten-year gilts. In comparison, Tesco has issued an AA-rated bond redeemable in 2007, that pays just 0.48 per cent more than ten-year gilts.

Mrs Morrissey points out that the only bond to run into real problems in the recent past was an A-rated bond issued by Barings. She said: "People take false comfort from ratings. I won't set a minimum grade for bonds in the portfolio. I believe in having a bond that is correctly valued rather than one which has a high rating."

To control the level of risk, Mrs Morrissey aims to build up a portfolio of about 50 bond holdings, with no more than 2 per cent of the fund's value in any one stock. However, Mr Hooper says that the increased element of risk will deter many of the elderly investors who typically buy units in corporate bond funds.

He said: "The whole thing about these funds is that they are low-risk. The inclusion of sub-investment grade bonds is an added worry. We would want to know much more about Helena Morrissey's investment experience."

Chase de Vere Investments is more likely to recommend the use of Commercial Union's Monthly Income Plus Pep, which pays out a similar monthly income but has a more conventional portfolio of corporate bonds, preference shares, convertibles and the income shares of split capital investment trusts.

No more than 0.65 per cent of the fund is invested in any particular holding, and the portfolio typically invests in 160 stocks and shares.

Mike Neumann, of BESt Investment, independent financial advisers, disagrees with Mr Hooper's assessment. He points out that even if a company does collapse, bond holders usually come near to the front of the queue for money when the company's assets are realised.

He says: "People overestimate the downside risk. This is debt, not equity. If you were investing in the shares of the companies, it might be a different matter.

"Mrs Morrissey wants to invest in something she can apply her own research to. You are investing in her expertise, and I think she has the capability to do well with this fund."

Douglas Gardner of Thomson's Financial Planning, independent financial adviser, is unlikely to recommend the purchase of any corporate bond Peps. He believes their future tax treatment is uncertain since the Government's decision to introduce a new tax-efficient savings scheme in 1999. The up-front charges, therefore, could outweigh Peps' tax advantages in the meantime.

He recommends that income seekers consider short-term returns of up to 6.5 per cent (net of basic rate tax) from insurance company guaranteed income bonds. Those aged 60 or more can get 7 per cent gross, fixed for five years from National Savings Pensioners Bonds. Interest is paid gross but subject to tax, and must be declared to the Inland Revenue.

Score: ★★★

Products graded from ★ (poor), to ★★★★★ (outstanding).

Bright tomorrow includes us out

One week hence, the method of buying and selling shares on the London Stock Exchange is scheduled to start changing yet again. Instead of brokers telephoning wholesale market-makers, after checking who is quoting the best price on the electronic quotation system, orders will be posted on an electronic noticeboard where they can be taken or matched.

Naturally, it is not as simple as that. The new system initially applies only to the blue chips that make up the FTSE 100 share index. And it will not apply to small investors whose orders will be dealt with via electronic links to the wholesalers, now confusingly called retail service providers.

Actually, it is not as simple as that either. If I have grasped it, deals in more than 1,000 shares, usually worth £4,000 plus but in theory £1,000 or less, may optionally be put on the electronic order book, though they will probably not be. And some low-cost services aggregate small orders into big ones that are traded at the best price on offer. So even modest private investors could be caught by the sort of sneaky and ruthless tactics that schoolchildren are told do not exist on the Stock Exchange. The snake in the grass strategy, for instance, involves entering orders at prices well adrift from "market" in the hope that some unwary mug will be snared. Such risks would become more potent if the new form of trading were used for smaller stocks that do not have a steady flow of orders. But that may never happen.

PERSONAL INVESTOR

GRAHAM SEARJEANT

For now, the main risks in electronic trading will be borne by professionals. Brokers will try to make sure that their private clients are affected only by the advantages. Richard Hunter, of NatWest Stockbrokers, argues that small investors should see no practical difference, except that the benefit of reform should filter through to them in narrower spreads between buying and selling prices.

You cannot help noticing, however, that this is another change that has been driven by the needs of big institutional and international investors. Small investors have been tagged on at the end, even though they make the majority of trades. We were squeezed out of most new issues. Institutional traders' needs also spawned Crest, the more efficient, new paperless share settlement system and the new gilt-edged settlement system. Allowance was made for individuals there too. But Crest, along with the popularity of Peps, accelerated economic pressure to deal via nominees.

Use of nominee holdings has separated shareholders from the companies they invest in. When did a company last try to contact you through a nominee holding? Attempts to make the nominee screen transparent, so that investors receive communications from the company and have normal non-financial rights, are having only limited success. Registrars may guarantee these rights to shares held in a company's corporate nominee, which is an improvement, but that hardly covers the issue.

Someone has to pay the costs of these services. You might think quoted companies would be delighted to embrace anyone enthusiastic enough to pay from their own pocket to become a part-owner. Not so. Too often they are seen as a costly nuisance. Money spent communicating with small shareholders is a wasted overhead, in contrast to money spent on £300-an-hour consultants, let alone the board. Summary accounts, often patronisingly inadequate, were dreamt up and foisted on many investors. Privatised groups wanted to save money on bloated registers of tiny holdings. Creative work has been done by a group of companies, now taken up by the Accounting Standards Board, to design better annual reports to serve both private and professional investors. But this is not a high priority for industry.

Few, if any, quoted companies entice 1 per cent of their shareholders to an annual presentation. Nor is there any clamour to reach investors through a dedicated company television channel. Such indifference to smaller fry is understandable when half a dozen institutions with the instincts of a wasp in a sweet shop may control a company's fate. That is, however, because more loyal private investors have been given the cold shoulder.

Boards should answer one key question. Would they prefer private shareholders to sell and go collective or to be persuaded to double their individual holdings? Either way, they should tell the Stock Exchange of their decision and act upon it.

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Following the July 1997 Budget the future of PEPs is uncertain. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has announced that a new tax-privileged vehicle, the Individual Savings Account (ISA), will be introduced during 1999. The current tax benefits for PEPs will continue until 5th April 1999 and the Government is now working on proposals for ISAs and the conversion of PEPs, TESSAs and other types of savings into ISAs.

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Perilous exercise in lethargy

COMMENT

ANNE ASHWORTH
Personal Finance Editor

Postponing pension planning is dangerous but oh so easy. Even usually irksome domestic tasks can seem more compelling than applying yourself to the intricacies of capital and initial unit structures, reduced allocation periods and other impenetrable pension small print.

There are now new excuses to delay the evil hour. Workers in pensionless employment can put off opting out of the state earnings related pension scheme (Serps) for personal plans because there may now be some advantage to staying put.

Meanwhile, many of those who suspect that they should be making extra retirement savings will now be using rumours of the abolition of higher-rate pension relief as a pretext to put away their chequebooks. Why enter a long-term commitment when the terms may soon become less favourable?

As we report on page 56, Budget tax changes mean that pension plan returns may not match the guaranteed payments offered by Serps. So you can put your feet up while waiting to see if the Government is willing to improve the sweetener for those who opt out, or put at risk its spending plans.

Sitting idly by while ministers rule on the fate of pension tax relief would be a perilous exercise in lethargy. Why alow the Chancellor to further squeeze the middle classes.

Abolishing higher-rate relief would raise at least £1 billion, sufficient to improve the sweetener significantly. Those believing that they would prefer other investments to pensions, if the relief were reduced, should be prepared for a shock. The Government is now almost certain to make pension contributions compulsory. With or without higher rate relief, you may be compelled to pay a percentage of your income into a pension.

The speculation surrounding higher-rate relief will surely stir life insurance salesmen into frenzied action. If you are resolved to use the tax benefits, we can make the task less tedious by suggesting you avoid any plan with the features mentioned in the first paragraph.

Mortgage bargains

THE autumn is providing plenty of opportunities to pay less for your mortgage. Every lender is desperate to fulfil its annual mortgage sales quota before the Christmas slowdown.

With fixed-rate deals as low as 6.45 per cent, why pay more? Borrowers who pocketed summer windfalls are persuading their lender to give them a discounted offer, or else. The shyer ones are stealing away to remortgage with competitors. Anyone contemplating such a move should ensure that they can make a swift exit at the end of the fixed rate. With a bit of luck, you may never need to pay the standard variable rate again.

The rising cost of caring

Gavin Lumsden says package deals may not be a bargain for those with private medical insurance

As the cost of private medical insurance (PMI) continues to accelerate at a record rate each year, an increasing number of companies are arranging "package" deals with hospitals in an attempt to keep expenses down. However, these deals may have the effect of further increasing bills, driving up premiums. Another effect may be a small number of private hospitals gaining a monopoly in some areas, adding yet more pressure to costs and premiums.

Typically, a package deal will involve insurers and hospitals agreeing on a fixed price for the 30 most common operations, such as wisdom teeth extraction, hernias and knee and hip replacements.

Ansel Harris, 72, has private medical insurance from Royal SunAlliance, which is partly paid for by his former employer. In June Mr Harris entered St John and Elizabeth, a private hospital in North London, to undergo an operation on a hernia. Mr Harris was up and walking within 24 hours.

When Royal SunAlliance sent him a copy of the hospital's bill he was dismayed to see that, while the fee for the surgeon and anaesthetist was a reasonable £500, the cost of his post-operative care and overnight stay was a staggering £1,645. Mr Harris immediately told the insurer not to pay the bill. The hospital initially refused to discuss the matter, prompting Mr Harris to do his own digging. He found that nearby hospitals charged around £900, while St John and Elizabeth would have charged him £796 if he had walked in off the street and had the operation uninsured.

Royal SunAlliance eventually told Mr Harris that they had a package deal with the hospital and that the fixed price for a hernia operation assumed a stay in hospital of three days. Mr Harris was amazed: "Each year the premiums on my policy have gone up by 10-12 per cent. The company claims it is the rising cost of medical care, but I think it is more to do with the cosy relationship between insurers and hospitals. The conventional wisdom around PMI is that nobody pays, but in fact it is policyholders who end up paying for the increased bill."

After an angry exchange of letters the hospital finally agreed to reduce its bill to £796. This has saved Royal SunAlliance, which did nothing, £849. It has agreed to donate half of the money to a charity, of which Mr Harris is chairman, that operates around the world including Sarajevo and Rwanda.

Tony Vick, finance director of St John and Elizabeth, said the hospital had similar arrangements with all the main insurers. "Package deals will allow patients to stay longer without any extra cost," he said.

Mark House of Royal SunAlliance's health insurance centre said the company had introduced the deals with a few hospitals in March and would be reviewing the success of the trial in the next month. He said the level of payment on the hernia might be changed. He said: "All credit goes to Mr Harris for picking up on the issue, but we would have picked it up in our review period anyway."

According to Laing & Buisson, a healthcare analyst, the costs of private medical insurance have outstripped inflation in nine out of the past ten years, largely the result of increased claims by policyholders, it says. PMI now accounts for 70 per cent of the £2.3 billion that is spent on private medical care. This dominance has given rise to a game of cat-and-mouse between insurers and the hospitals that rely so heavily on them for income.

Insurers' early attempts at cost control focused on fixing room rates and operating fees. When hospitals reacted by increasing the expenses of drugs and dressings, insurers in turn responded with the packaged deal, which fixes all costs of hospital care.

However, last year holders of private medical insurance policies claimed an average of £452 in care, an increase of 5.5 per cent and the biggest rise yet. This prompted the three largest private medical insurers, PPP, Bupa and Norwich Union, to take an extra sanction. They now give discounts to policyholders who use "preferred" hospitals. However, in its latest annual review Laing & Buisson says that such a strategy will cause the closure of hospitals that are left out of these schemes. The remaining hospitals will effectively be local monopolies and could charge insurers anything they like.

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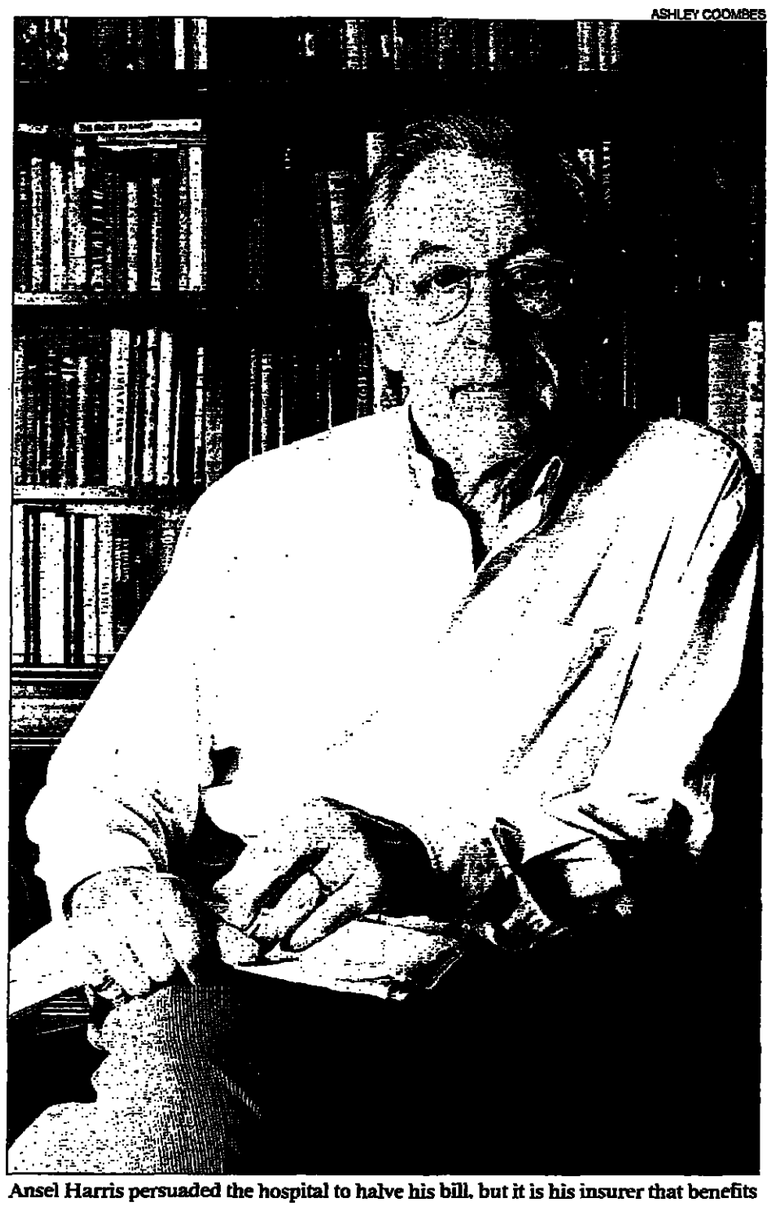

Ansel Harris persuaded the hospital to halve his bill, but it is his insurer that benefits

How healthy is the deal?

Private medical insurance policyholders provide 70 per cent of the money spent on private medical care in this country, according to Laing & Buisson, a healthcare analyst. But how good a deal are they getting?

There are now 3.4 million PMI policyholders, compared with about one million in 1972. A total of 6.3 million people are covered today by these policies. As a result, the amount of money flowing to private hospitals, clinics, and physicians has rocketed from a paltry £41 million 24 years ago to £2.3 billion last year. Hospitals and clinics take the lion's share of the income: nearly £1.5 billion in 1996. Fees to surgeons, anaesthetists and physicians, however, amounted to £652 million, up from £282 million ten years ago. A large part of this growth has been the pace of medical development, which has made more care possible and increased claims from policyholders. Ten years ago the average claim for care was £213; today it is £452.

Policyholder numbers rise 2 per cent a year but PMI premiums by 10 per cent. While the cost of claims rose 5.5 per cent in real terms last year the amount insurers paid to healthcare providers rose 7 per cent. Insurers, it seems, pay more than they need to. Unfortunately, the burden falls on people like Mr Harris.

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COMPANY	VALUE AT YEAR 5 (£)	VALUE AT YEAR 20 (£)	RETIREMENT FUND (£)	RATINGS: PROJECTIONS	RATINGS: PAST PERFORMANCE
Equitable Life	7,099	57,961	241,076	A+ A+ A+	A+ A A
Clerical Medical	5,307	54,839	235,363	B A A	B A B
General Accident	5,715	53,612	228,685	B A A	A X A
Norwich Union	5,500	52,500	225,000	B A A	B B A
NPI	5,747	51,618	222,240	B A B	B C C
Scottish Amicable	5,705	52,343	223,790	B A B	C B B
Sun Alliance	6,500	52,300	215,000	A+ A B	C C C
Scottish Widows	6,395	51,135	219,235	A B B	B C B
Commercial Union	5,574	49,707	225,809	B B A	X C C
Medical Sickness	6,280	46,300	247,000	A C A+	A+ B B
Standard Life	6,442	51,191	206,591	A B C	B B B
Scottish Mutual	6,381	48,812	208,576	A B C	B B A
Legal & General	5,550	52,055	209,845	B A C	C B C
CIS	5,074	50,657	230,540	C B A	A A X
Scottish Equitable	5,165	50,958	236,100	C B A	C C A
Royal Insurance	5,126	49,010	237,258	C B A	C C C
Wesleyan Assurance	5,316	48,109	210,214	B B B	A A B
Eagle Star	4,692	52,279	224,234	C A B	A A+ A
Prudential	6,353	49,360	183,302	A B C-	A X X
National Mutual Life	5,138	48,643	220,896	C B B	C B B
Britannic Life	4,956	51,634	216,000	C B B	C C C-
Britannic Assurance	5,447	49,426	201,259	B B C	B X X
Scottish Life	4,883	50,433	218,825	C B B	B B B
NFU Mutual	4,955	50,956	212,543	C B B	B A B
Guardian Financial	5,284	49,885	196,279	B B C	X X X
Friends Provident	5,290	43,500	221,000	B C B	X C B
Royal London	5,359	48,991	195,399	B B C	B A A
Scottish Provident	5,280	49,600	197,000	B B C	B A B
Colonial	4,907	48,112	200,901	C B C	X X X
Sun Life	4,915	43,865	216,024	C C B	C B B
RNPFN	4,800	51,170	235,435	C C- A	X A- A-
AXA Equity & Law	4,350	42,600	186,000	C- C- C-	C C A
Average	5,456	49,549	216,693		

Based on investment of £100 a month, starting at age 30
n/a data not supplied or not yet available
Investment funds are assumed to grow at 9 per cent a year

THE INDEPENDENT 12th OCTOBER 1996

Last year The Independent enrolled John Chapman, the official who pioneered a rating system put forward in an OFT discussion document, to analyse the pension plans offered by insurance companies. The results of that investigation are printed above.

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John Chapman's pioneering methods for comparing performance between companies have been adopted by Money Marketing, the magazine for independent financial intermediaries, which asked actuaries at KPMG to carry out the detailed calculations for each company. Mr Chapman's analysis for The Independent uses Money Marketing's calculations.

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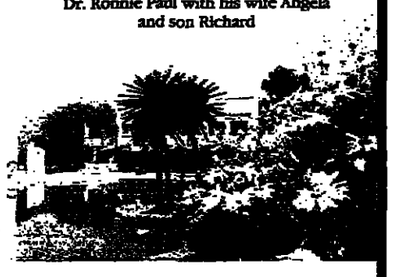
Dr. Ronnie Paul with his wife Angela and son Richard



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How to read company accounts like a book

Annual reports give would-be shareholders invaluable information about the performance and prospects of listed firms, says John Givens

Julian Street—Lucian Cary—Frederick Hazlitt Brennan—Isaac F. Marcosson
F. Scott Fitzgerald—Joseph Hergesheimer—Albert R. Wetjen—Garet Garrett

The stock market intrigues private investors, but company reports can baffle

If you fancy your chances of making a killing in shares but have little experience of dealing in equities, one of the first things you should learn is how to read annual reports and accounts. Every company listed on the main UK stock market or the Alternative Investment Market must, by law, publish these at the end of its financial year.

Although much of the information given is complex and for investment managers, accountants, lawyers and actuaries only, the publications also include a host of facts and figures that the amateur investor will find invaluable in making decisions about a particular company.

Anyone with shares in a company, or considering buying them, should monitor its performance by reading the report and accounts. This could include people holding unit trusts if they know which companies the fund is investing in, those with money in investment trusts and company employees with shares through sharesave, options or bonus schemes.

CONTENTS

Most reports and accounts get off to a heavy start with the chairman's statement and the chief executive's report, both of which can be long and occasionally complex. The chairman's statement will take a broad view of overall performance, while the chief executive will expand a little more, breaking down each of the company's operations.

The directors' report can also be daunting, covering issues that the Companies Act demands be included in the report and accounts. However, this section can also throw up interesting information, not least about directors' shareholdings and pay.

BALANCE SHEET

The balance sheet is a snapshot of a company's financial standing at the end of its trading year and shows two main types of figures — assets and liabilities.

Assets are items owned by the company and include cash in the bank, investments, property, stock, equipment and money due from debtors. Assets are fixed or current. The first are possessions of the company whose value is stable and which are likely to stay more or less the same in the foreseeable future, such as property. Current assets are amounts that can vary and which are easier to cash in, such as money in the bank and the value of stock.

Liabilities are debts owed in the form of loans and overdrafts or owed to creditors for supplying goods or services.

As a rule of thumb, assets should exceed liabilities or the company is technically insolvent, although this does not necessarily mean that it will stop trading.

PROFIT AND LOSS

The profit and loss account is the set of figures that interests most shareholders. It shows how much profit the company has made, or the extent of losses.

A number of indicators can be found in this account to help you to decide whether to invest, or continue to invest, in the company. For example, the statistics show annual turnover less the costs of sales, that is the amount of money it took to run the business, with the difference being the gross profit or loss.

Because the profit and loss statement compares results with the previous year, it is easy to see trends for turnover and costs. If turnover has fallen and costs have increased, resulting in smaller profits or bigger losses, you should be on your guard because the figures suggest that sales are on the downturn while expenses are rising. There may be a good reason for this, and you should read the chief executive's and the chairman's reports and the notes accompanying the figures to see whether they explain what happened.

ANALYSIS

There are a number of key accounting ratios that you can look at to form an opinion of a listed company's strength.

The current ratio is found by dividing current assets by current liabilities on the balance sheet, and gives an idea of a company's liquidity. If the answer is below 1.0, the amount the company owes in the short term exceeds the cash it can get its hands on quickly to pay it.

The gearing ratio indicates how much a company relies on borrowed money and the level of borrowing. A low ratio suggests a small loan base, and a high ratio reflects heavy borrowing. This ratio is useful in assessing a company's vulnerability to a rise in interest rates.

The return on capital employed, found by dividing pre-tax profit by shareholders' funds, shows the rate of return made on money tied up in the business.

TRENDS

Companies with cashflow problems can easily go to the wall, so if cash balances are falling, ask why. A healthly cashflow is also vital to future expansion, since growing a business invariably means spending more money than normal.

If the company has borrowed more money than last year, find out what it was used for and what effect it has on the gearing ratio. It may be that the funds were used to finance a planned expansion that will make the organisation even more profit in the future. On the other hand, it could be that the money has been used to prop up part or all of the business, a bad sign for shareholders.

If the company has changed the way its annual accounts are calculated, it must, by law, tell you and show what the effect of the change is. In spite of the stringent reporting procedures imposed on stock market-listed companies, there is still room for "creative accounting" and sometimes, although rarely, an organisation may try to hide bad news in the accounts to stop shareholders from baling out and having a negative effect on the share price.

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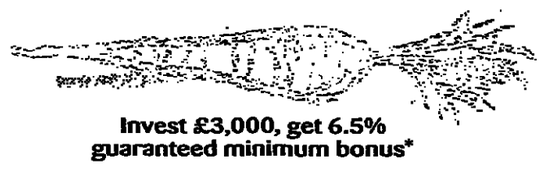

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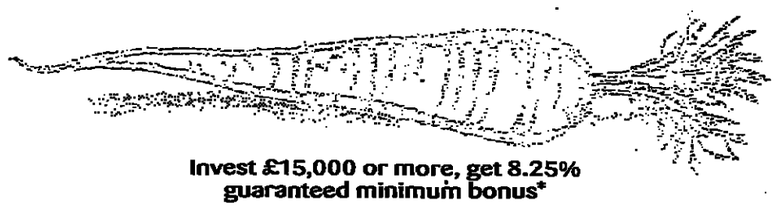

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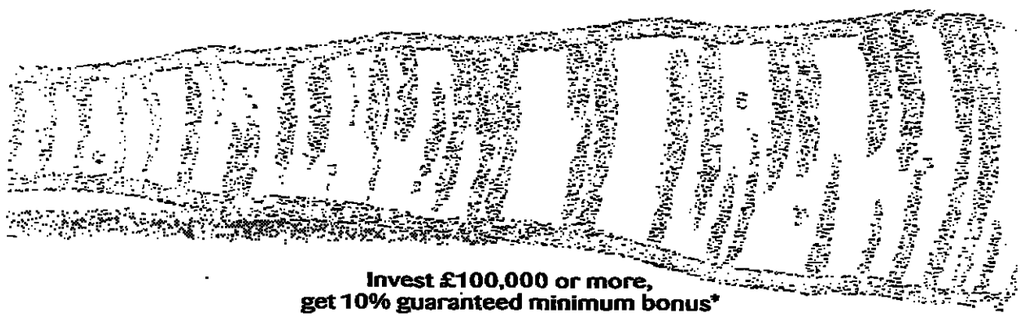

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John Givens continues our series looking at the issues and problems faced by the self-employed

Freelances need security

GOT IT ALL ONE PENSIONS

Setting up your own business will be costly enough without having to worry about how you will manage financially in 20 or 30 years' time, but the message to all self-employed people is simple — ignore pension planning at your peril.

No one wants to be poor in retirement, but, with more immediate expenses to cover and often the belief that a successful business will secure a future without the need for pensions, a surprising number of people muddle through a self-employed career without a thought for paying the bills when they stop working.

Roddy Kohn, of Kohn Cougar, the Bristol financial adviser, said: "Unfortunately pension planning does tend to get left behind when people become self-employed.

"The pressures of running a business take over and there are probably more pressing things to think about, but whether they are more important than securing your future in retirement is another thing.

"However, when people get to about 45 they start to realise they should be doing something in preparation for their retirement and get a shock when they see how much it is going to cost them each month to provide a reasonable income when they stop work."

■ **Delaying your pension:** The impact of delaying setting up a pension can be substantial. According to Sottish Life, the pension provider, a man aged 30 starting to pay gross contributions of £100 a month until retirement at 60 would build up a pension fund of £137,000 over the 30-year period, enough to buy an annuity of £13,500 a year, assuming annual growth of 9 per cent. However, if he put off starting the £100-a-month scheme until age 40, he would build a fund of just £54,900, giving annual pension income of just £5,410.

Likewise, says John Sheffield, of Ultimate Pension Reviews, of Wimbledon, a 25-year-old man wanting a pension equivalent to £15,000 today when he retires at 60 would have to put £300 a month in a personal pension for the next 35 years, assuming the fund grew at an average of 3 per cent a year above inflation.

However, a 35-year-old man wanting the same benefits at 60 would probably rue his delay in taking out a pension plan, with premiums rising to £500 a month over the 25 years to retirement.

Apart from the obvious benefit of paying into a pension for as many years as possible, part of the reason for the huge difference in cash value is that many of the costs applied to pension schemes by the companies that manage them are taken from the fund in the early years. Once these have been accounted for, a greater percentage of the contributions you make are invested in the pension fund, with a significant proportion of the growth coming in the policy's later years. So the longer you have a pension, the bigger the lump sum at maturity.

■ **Taking the benefits:** Most personal pensions allow you to retire at 50, although the longer you work and contribute to a scheme, the more you can expect the pension to pay you when you do retire.

■ **Your choices:** When you decide to retire, you will be given a fund value by your pension manager and you then have three choices.

You can use the cash to buy an annuity, effectively a policy guaranteeing a regular monthly income until you die. For someone retiring at 60, this is generally about 10 per cent a year of the fund value. So, a £100,000 pension pot should bring an income of about £10,000 a year. Retiring earlier than 60 will reduce the annuity since the amount of time you are expected to take an income from the plan goes up and therefore the amount paid out overall would also increase.

Rather than take a full annuity, you can choose to take up to 25 per cent of your pension fund as a tax-free lump sum, leaving the rest to buy an annuity. This will give you money up front, but cut your annual income.

The third choice is to wait to buy your annuity until later. Annuities are normally fixed and guaranteed to pay monthly sums until you die, and because they are normally linked to interest rates, timing a purchase is critical. The law lets you delay buying until you are 75 years old, so you have time to choose carefully.

If, meanwhile, you rely on your pension fund for an income, you can opt for income drawdown. This lets you take out, each year, up to the equivalent of the level of annuity that your pension fund could buy in the open market until you do convert your fund into an annuity.

■ **What you can contribute:** The amount you can put in a personal pension each year depends on your age and is calculated as a maximum percentage of your gross profits — referred to as net relevant earnings. People under 36 can put in up to 17.5 per cent of profits a year. Policyholders aged 61 to 74 can put in 40 per cent.

■ **Tax relief:** Like employees, the self-employed can claim tax relief on personal pension contributions. So, if you want to pay a gross sum of £100 a month into a pension plan and are a basic-rate income tax payer at 23p in the pound, the actual monthly sum you pay is just £77, with the Inland Revenue contributing the extra £23 to make up your £100 premium. However, unlike employees who get tax relief on a month-to-month basis, self-employed people must pay the full monthly gross premiums themselves and wait until the end of the tax year to reclaim any relief due, with their tax code being amended the next year to account for any refund owed by the Revenue.

■ **Flexible pensions:** The increase in self-employed workers — now 3.5 million in the UK — has led some pension companies to offer flexible schemes for those whose income fluctuates. Wesleyan's Retirement Account, for example, lets you alter contributions at any time, or suspend them if income is greatly reduced.

Ali sets shining example

ALAN WELLER

Ali Taylor aims to pay £25 a month

Young people becoming self-employed should take a leaf out of Ali Taylor's book and start their personal pension early. The 26-year-old freelance theatre designer from London Fields is on the lookout for a pension scheme after realising that the longer she leaves it, the harder it will be for her to save for a comfortable retirement.

Ali is typical of many self-employed people — she knows that she should be making provision for her retirement now, but the unpredictability of her annual earnings, and the fact that at 26 years old the age of 60 seems like a lifetime away, have stopped her from sorting out a pension.

However, Ali was convinced that she needed to act while she was young by a 35-year-old colleague who was shocked when he was told how much he would have to pay into a personal pension each month until he was 60 to give him a reasonable income when he retired.

She said: "It hit him how expensive it was going to be and he regrets not starting a pension when he was younger. This really brought it home to me. I thought I'd better sort something out because I don't want to be poor when I retire."

Ali, who earns around £15,000 a year, plans to pay about £25 a month into a pension scheme, enough to get her started, although she might decide to pay a lump sum of £300 a year if that proves easier.

She has been impressed by Virgin's advertising for its pension plan, saying: "The advertising seems to concentrate on young people. Most other companies advertising pensions seem to focus on much older people, so I think Virgin might be better suited to me."

Wanted: a test of performance

PETER TRIEVNOR

Jon Danzig working on a film production. He also uses a computer to track his pensions

The importance of a pension to provide a retirement income has not been lost on Jon Danzig, a self-employed Watford man. The 43-year-old writer and director of business and educational films has several personal pension schemes, the first started when he was 27.

Pension plans for the self-employed can be more complicated than for employed people since tax relief on contributions has to be calculated at the end of the tax year rather than on a month-to-month basis. Mr Danzig solves the problem by contributing to most of his policies with lump sums each year, although he does have one monthly premium plan. His schemes allow him to give up work any time after 50, although the longer he continues in self-employment after this the more the funds will accumulate.

Mr Danzig spends about 15 minutes a day tracking his investment portfolio using a special computer software package and is an expert on personal pensions, which has led him to call for some pension providers to improve the information they give to policyholders. His plea comes after difficulties with Sun Life, one of the UK's leading life and pensions offices, when he asked for an illustration of how his plan was performing. Initially the company miscalculated the size of Mr Danzig's pension fund by more than £3,000 although it later admitted its mistake and apologised.

In spite of this he was still concerned that the fund seemed to be underperforming and asked for a full breakdown of all the cash he had paid into the retirement scheme and the charges levied for managing it. Sun Life was unable to provide the in-depth statement, although it did present him with a 50-page report showing how his money had been used to buy units in various funds.

Mr Danzig would like to see a change so that pension providers can give policyholders a bank account-style statement showing exactly what has happened each year. He said: "Once a year or every two years would do, but at least it would give me a chance to see exactly what is happening to my money. At the moment there is no way of knowing what happens to dividends, other than Sun Life says they are absorbed into my fund. It would be nice to know exactly how much they are, where they are coming from and when."

Sun Life says producing more detailed statements would lift administration costs, which would be passed on to the policyholder, meaning fund values could fall.

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Women in the dark on pensions

TENS of thousands of women are so confused about pensions that they *do not know whether* they are entitled to one from the State. However, many have made no alternative provision for income in their old age.

Those who had hoped to rely on their husband's pension are discovering too late in life that this will be inadequate to support them.

These findings come from the TUC, which was overwhelmed with calls from women during a pensions awareness campaign. More than 100,000 people called the TUC in just five days.

The TUC, which said that the calls revealed a "startling" lack of awareness, is now urging the Government to set up a permanent telephone advice line for women.

One in four of those calling had no idea whether they were entitled to a state pension.

Nearly 20 per cent of callers had no pension entitlement, while a *smaller number had not* joined the occupational scheme at work. In some cases, this was because they were on temporary contracts or because their scheme still barred part-*time workers.*

Women who had taken time off work to raise a family were confused about whether they would receive a basic state pension.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Den and Angie's *Eastenders* break-up looks trouble-free compared with the repercussions for those who left Serps

Millions may clamour for a return to Serps

Caroline Merrell on the issues facing workers who opted out

In 1987, *Eastenders* viewers were engrossed in the marital strife of 'Dirty' Den and Angie, the publicans of the Queen Vic. Their break-up coincided with a break from the past for thousands of workers who left the state pension scheme for pension independence.

Encouraged by a multi-million-pound Government advertising campaign, incentivised by what can only described as an expedient bribe, persuaded by troupes of commission-hungry financial advisers, millions decided to leave the State Earnings Related Pension Scheme (Serps) in favour of taking out an "appropriate personal pension". They gave up their rights to Serps, the additional state scheme, separate from the basic state pension, in exchange for a rebate of National Insurance contributions, which could be invested with a *pensions provider.*

The Government was thus able to extricate itself from a Gordian knot. Serps, as it was designed in the Seventies was unworkable. The numbers of people contributing and the amount they contributed were not going to be enough to pay for the benefits promised. Cuts in Serps had already been administered by skilfully linking rises in the amount paid to inflation rather than earnings.

However, this sleight of hand was not enough to see off an impending disaster, which is why the Conservative Government decided to offer the contracting-out option, heavily laced with extra financial bonuses to make it more palatable to a populace used to relying on the State to provide.

At first, the amount of rebate received was level — it did not alter with your age. This meant that at some point it became more financially advantageous to return to Serps because the contracting out rebate when invested would not have time to produce the benefits being given up.

This was the last thing the *Government wanted, so it* altered the level of the rebate so it was related to age — the older you were, the more you got. It was thus able to prevent more people from contracting back in to Serps.

Now, the Labour Government has managed to muddy the waters further by cutting the tax relief on pension fund dividends — stunting the potential investment growth of the rebate, and making Serps more attractive. By right, millions should return to the scheme they so easily gave up. Here Weekend Money tries to answer your questions about what to do.

Q I am currently contracted out of Serps. Am I affected?

A Nearly six million people are contracted out of Serps, through personal pensions or company schemes where the benefits are defined by the contributions made. Around a further 20 million are in final-salary pension schemes. Final salary schemes will be unaffected because employers guarantee to match the Serps benefits given up.

The other six million could be affected. The Association of British Insurers, the trade body that acts on behalf of the pensions industry, says the tax change means that most people, particularly women who get their Serps benefits *earlier than men, should con*tract back into the scheme. Before the tax change, the ages for contracting back in for men and women was 52 and 46, respectively.

Q *I am being offered the* chance to contract out of Serps, should I do it?

A The advice most insurance companies and financial advisers are giving their clients is to wait and see what happens. The view is that the Government does not want *to have millions of people* returning to the State scheme. It has claimed that it wants to keep Serps, but the indications are that it may have to water down this promise.

Q Will not taking action prove incredibly detrimental to my final pension?

A Pension providers believe that delaying the decision whether to stay in, leave or rejoin Serps is not going to create problems straight away. However, it does leave the pensions industry hamstrung about advice it should be giving customers.

Q What is the pension industry doing about it?

A The ABI and others have had discussions with John Denham, the pensions Minister, about the level of the rebate. The industry believes it will have to rise to make up for the tax relief swiped by the Government in the last Budget. A 10 per cent rise in the level of the rebate has been *suggested, which could* cost around £500 million.

Q How long has the Government got to sort out the problem?

A The rebate is paid out annually, from April to April. In theory, therefore, the Government has just a few months to work out a solution. The only other alternative is to change the way the value of the rebate is projected to grow.

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Gavin Lumsden says insurers are under pressure to devise equity-release schemes

Home-income plans are given new lease of life

More elderly people could be converting the value in their homes into much-needed cash if the Government has its way.

Faced with an increasingly aged population and an escalating social services bill, the Government is keen to get pensioners to look after themselves as far as possible. However, many old people are asset-rich but cash-poor; the value of their house stands in stark contrast with the paucity of their income and savings. The problem is how to release the capital locked in bricks and mortar into income without making them leave their home.

So-called equity-release plans are the solution and the Government is now putting pressure on lenders and insurers to come up with more schemes. However, Hilary Armstrong, Housing Minister, is determined that finance companies should not repeat the tragic mistakes of the 1980s when two earlier versions of home-income plans left pensioners with worthless investments in debt and facing the loss of their homes.

Ten years ago many low-income pensioners were persuaded to remortgage their homes and put the money into investment bonds. These were supposed to generate enough income to pay off interest on the loan and give investors enough to live on. Unfortunately, this became impossible when interest rates rose and stock market returns plummeted. Another type of scheme, known as roll-up loans, also proved fatally attractive as they did not require borrowers to make any capital or interest repayments. Instead these were added to the loan. This was fine when interest rates were low. However, when interest rates rose over 10 per cent many borrowers found that the loan could build up very fast. Many were made homeless when the value of the loan exceeded the value of the home. In 1990 regulators took action and a long legal battle for compensation began. Several firms active in the sales of home-income plans collapsed, amid controversy and scandal, including Fisher Prew Smith, of Southport, and Aylesbury Associates of Bromley.

Now Mrs Armstrong is challenging lenders to put these dark days behind them and come up with new schemes. Some lenders, notably those in the Safe Home Income Plan (Ship) organisation, the Halifax and small building societies such as Cambridge, Cheshire, and Kent Reliance, have acted to fill in the gap with two different schemes available solely for people over 69: the mortgage annuity, better known as the home-income plan, and the home-reversion plan.

Home-income plans allow homeowners to borrow between £15,000 and £30,000 on their property and buy an annuity which provides them with a guaranteed income for life. Part of the income from the annuity goes to pay the fixed interest on the loan. Because both income and the interest are fixed homeowners can be sure they will not fall into the problems of home-income borrowers in the 1980s. The loan only becomes payable on death and is taken from the proceeds of the sale of the home. Borrowers have the security of staying in their home while enjoying any appreciation in the value of their homes. HIP borrowers get another perk from the Government. Whereas other homeowners will have mortgage interest relief at source (Miras) reduced to 10 per cent from next April, they will continue to get the relief at the full basic rate of tax (23 per cent). However, because Miras is available only on loans up to £30,000 this is the effective ceiling for most home-income plans.

Unfortunately women do less well out of home-income plans. Because they live longer than men insurers give women a smaller annual annuity than their male counterparts. For instance, a 70-year-old single woman buying an annuity with £30,000 would get around £852 after tax (which is levied at 20 per cent on investment income), while a man of the same age would get £1,303. The gap persists the older they get. At 80 the woman gets an annuity of £1,965 while a man gets £2,672. Couples get even less because the annuity is paid until both partners die. A man and woman in their early 70s will get around £688 a year increasing to £1,375 when both reach 80.

Home-reversion plans are for people looking for greater sums of money. Here borrowers actually agree to sell between 50 per cent and 100 per cent of the value of their home when they die in return for a large one-off payment or a series of smaller lump sums. Again, these deals enable you to continue living in your home and, if you retain some ownership in the house, to benefit if the value of the property increases. However, this is a last-stop measure as the payments you will receive will only represent a third to a half of your home's value. If you live in an ex-council property you might not be able to do a home reversion. Such properties can be difficult to value and are usually less attractive to the City investors who underpin the deal.

Home & Capital, one of two Ship companies running reversion schemes, offers four options to people over 70. For instance, a 74-year-old woman who agreed to revert the entire value of a £150,000 house could get a £66,960 lump sum upfront. Alternatively she could take a smaller sum and combine it with a series of annual payments. In total these other options will pay her more money, if she lives to take it. For instance the woman could take half the lump sum (£33,480) and five annual payments of £8,166, giving her a total of £74,310, or a £16,740 lump sum (a quarter) and ten annual payments of £7,150, making a total of £88,240. The best deal, if she lives to 92, is to take the £16,740 lump sum and 17 annual payments of £5,114, giving her a total of £104,188.

After retiring five years ago at 72, Janet Greenwood, who had worked as a clerk for an insurance company, found she was getting through her savings at an alarming rate. She contacted Home & Capital after hearing about equity-release schemes through a friend, who valued her bungalow in Woking at £120,000. She decided to revert the full value of her house. In return H&C gave her a £53,000 lump sum last year. In addition to her solicitor's fees she had to pay the company 1 per cent of the value of the home. However, now she has invested the money, Janet gets £300 of interest a month to supplement her state pension. She said: "I didn't want to go into a retirement home. I'm very active for my age and keen on gardening. These plans are marvellous especially if you have no family to leave your property to."

Last year the Bank of Scotland launched the Shared Appreciation Mortgage (SAM). It allows people to borrow a proportion of the value of their home in return for sharing most of the appreciation in the property with the bank on death.

There are two versions of the plan, one charging 0 per cent interest and the other 5.75 per cent. With the former the most you can borrow is 25 per cent of the house whilst the amount of appreciation you will share is three times loan to value (LTV). If you borrow 20 per cent LTV you will share 60 per cent of the growth in value of the house. This means if a person borrowed £20,000 on a home worth £100,000, which subsequently doubled in value, the bank would get £60,000 from the borrower's estate.

With the interest paying version of SAM the amount of appreciation you share is equal to the loan, which can be up to 75 per cent of the value of the home. A house valued at £100,000 would enable the owner to borrow up to £75,000 on which he or she would pay fixed interest of 5.75 per cent. When the borrower dies the Bank of Scotland will get 75 per cent of the growth in value. If the house doubled in value the bank would get £75,000. In both schemes, if the property value falls the bank gets nothing.

For a leaflet from Safe Home Income Plans contact Hinton & Wild (Home Plans) on 0181-390 8166.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

THERE are some important points to bear in mind before taking out a home income plan. First, the extra income you might be able to generate may reduce any income support or council tax benefits.

You should consider discussing your plans with your family so they know there could be a claim on your estate when you die. Also consider your state of health. If you die early you will see little benefit from the plan while the value of your estate could be significantly reduced.

Finally, find your own solicitor to check the agreement rather than use one recommended by the plan provider.

Leonard and Joan Clark's home reversion plan ensures they have enough disposable income to enjoy their retirement

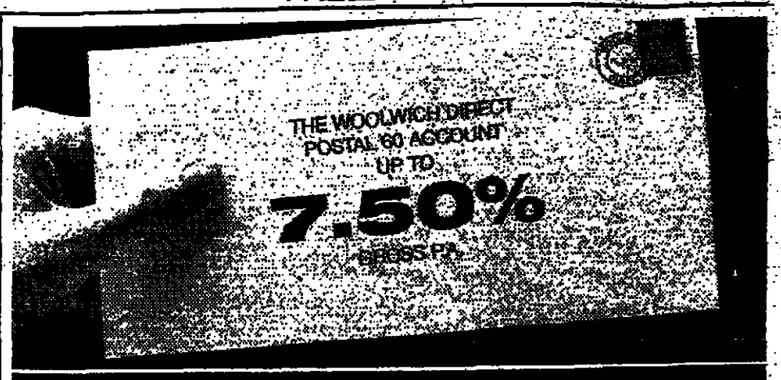
Still able to enjoy home comforts

Pensioners Leonard and Joan Clark downsized in 1988, selling their three-bedroom home in Mitcham, London, and buying a maisonette in Burgh Heath, Surrey. Four years later the money raised from the sale was beginning to run out. Not relishing the idea of life on a basic state pension, Leonard started to consider other options.

A newspaper article drew his attention to home reversion plans, and having consulted Hinton & Wild (Home Plans), a specialist adviser in Surbiton, the couple agreed to sell 79 per cent of their £60,000 home to Carlyle Life Assurance. At the time Leonard was 70 and Joan was 71. Under the agreement the couple received a joint annuity of £1,680 per year, giving them a monthly income of £139.

Mr Clark says the money has made a huge difference. "We have been able to carry on running the car, decorate the home and buy new clothes when we want to," he said.

The couple took care to tell their son, to whom they intend to leave the remaining 21 per cent of the property's value. The only niggle was the time it took to get the plan agreed. Carlyle Life had never done a home reversion plan on a maisonette and it was nine months before the deal was completed. Carlyle Life gave them one month's extra payment for the inconvenience.



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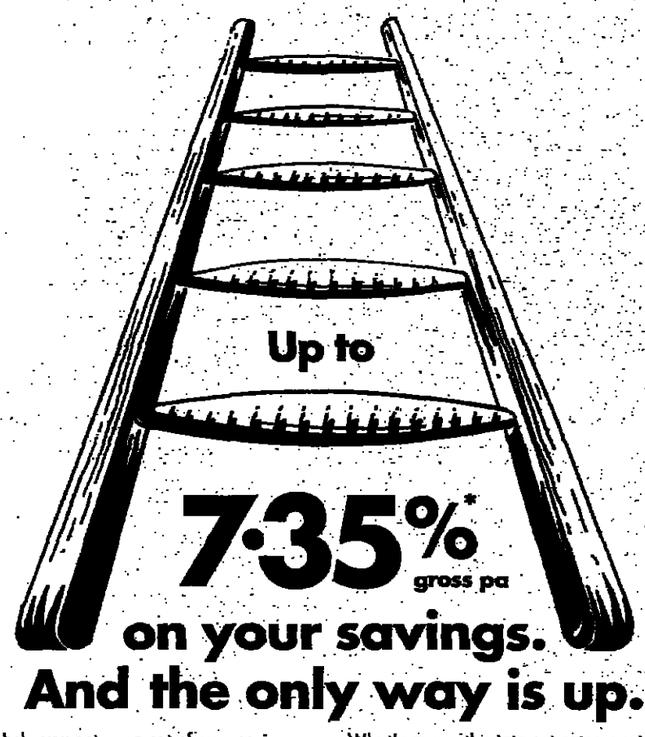

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TONY WHITE

Andrew Muir wants a seat on the Nationwide board

Society's status faces new threat

The Nationwide Building Society, which has already fought off one campaign by carpetbaggers to force it to demutualise, faces a new challenge to its independence.

Andrew Muir, 32, from Slough, is bidding for a seat on the society's board with a view to persuading the directors to return surplus profits to members.

Mr Muir, who has been a saver for ten years with the Nationwide, said he disapproved of carpetbagging, but felt that "the current board has lost touch with the majority of investors". He wants to force the society to reward long-term investors with a windfall lump sum, although he says this could be achieved without the Nationwide floating on the stock market.

Mr Muir runs a financial recruitment agency in Slough and was formerly an accountant. He estimates that savers and borrowers could receive bonuses of between £500 and £5,000 in return for their long-term support.

"I am not actively seeking the Nationwide's conversion," he said. "I do believe, however, that the society is not returning our profits to us as members. If a member dies, the membership dies with them, with no benefit to their estate."

He said that in spite of Nationwide's slightly more competitive rates for savers and borrowers, members would have to wait 50 years before they saw the same benefit as they would if they received a lump sum now.

If elected to the board, he will be pushing for a variable distribution of profits, which favours long-term members. He maintains that he has no connection with Members for Conversion, the pressure group headed by Michael Hardern, the freelance butler who attempted to force the Nationwide to convert to a bank in the summer.

Mr Muir plans to collect 50 signatures from qualifying members and put his bid for a seat on the board at the society's annual meeting in April.

He can be contacted at Andrew Muir, PO Box 358, Slough PDO, Berkshire, SL1 1YS, or by fax on 01753 533002.

MARIANNE CURPHEY

Loans can finance a facelift or buy a new car. **Anne Ashworth** considers the options

Securing the right loan

The reasons for taking out a small loan range from the mundane to the exotic. While most aspiring borrowers say that they need the money for a new car or home improvements, a survey showed that customers of Yorkshire Bank were more open about their motives. Many applicants were financing plastic surgery and did not feel that they had to claim on the application to be paying for a new roof when they were really after a new nose.

Another oft-stated reason for arranging a loan is to repay existing debts. The trade calls these consolidation loans.

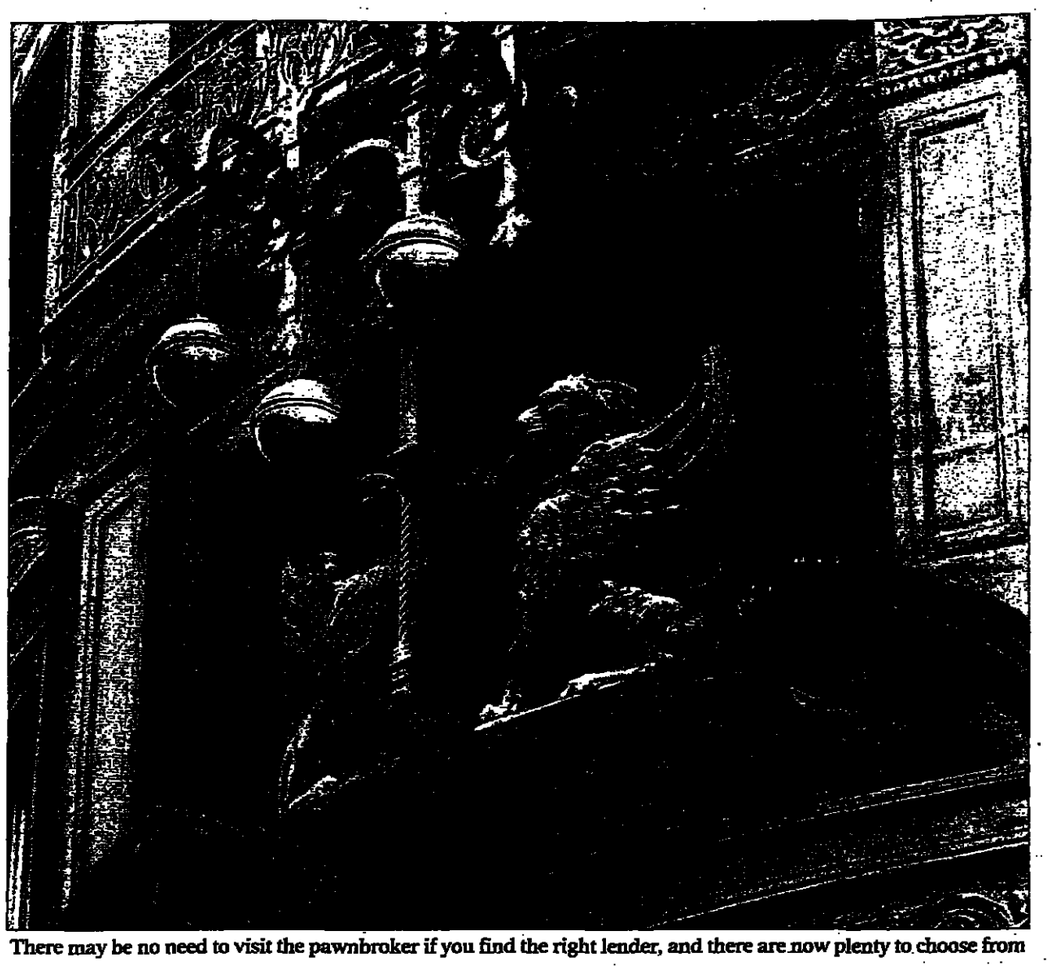
Whatever your need, any number of organisations are now eager and willing to lend you money. This means that the potential for decreasing the cost of the loan is considerable, particularly if you prefer to organise the deal over the telephone.

■ **Home improvements:** If you want to raise money for some domestic refurbishment, the options include increasing your mortgage or remortgaging with your existing lender or a competitor.

A Halifax borrower with a £100,000 mortgage seeking a £5,000 home improvement loan would pay the bank's current variable mortgage rate of 8.45 per cent. If the loan was repaid over 25 years, it would add an extra £40.54 a month to the £672 payment on an interest-only mortgage. Repaying the money over 15 years would increase the bill by £50.02, while clearing the debt over three years would cost an extra £163 a month.

The sharp decline in medium and long-term fixed-rate mortgage offers has led many homeowners to contemplate remortgaging to fund repairs. In some cases, although they may be borrowing a larger amount, their repayments may fall, especially if they have been paying their lender's standard variable mortgage rate. Some lenders are so eager for customers that they are offering cashbacks of up to 6 per cent of the value of the loan.

London & Country, the Bath mortgage broker, points out that a borrower with a £100,000 loan currently paying 8.45 per cent could switch to a remortgage deal from the Stroud & Swindon Building Society, increase his loan to £105,000 and pay £582 a month. This is a saving of £90.


There may be no need to visit the pawnbroker if you find the right lender, and there are now plenty to choose from

■ **Secured loans:** Home improvement and remortgage rates are lower than the typical personal loan rate because the borrowing is secured against the value of your home. The bank or building society is entitled to force a sale of the property to recover the debt. It is also possible to borrow more cheaply if you have another valuable asset, such as a life assurance policy, that you can offer as security.

Scottish Widows Bank, a division of the life assurance group, offers variable-rate policy loans of £1,000 or more secured against one of its own policies or those of 30 other insurers. You can borrow a maximum of 75 per cent of the surrender or cash-in value of the policy. The current Annual Percentage Rate (APR or "true rate") is 10.47 per cent. This will vary with the bank base rate. You may be able to negotiate a similar rate with your own bank by offering a life policy as security. Despite their reputation, branch managers can be surprisingly flexible.

■ **Personal loans:** The standard issue bank loan is an unsecured bank loan with a fixed rate. As the bank has no security, it is likely to attempt to persuade you to buy repayment protection insurance which will pay out if you fall sick or are made redundant. This cover will add another £20 a month to the repayments on a £5,000 loan over three years.

You may balk at this expense, especially because insurers will find every excuse not to pay out under these policies. For example, your claim will be refused if you have been sacked, rather than made redundant. Even if you do succeed in making a claim the payments may not last for more than one year.

Although the personal loan market is said to be very competitive, rates for the same size of loan vary somewhat between banks. The Abbey National APR for a £5,000 loan over three years is 14.9 per cent, against 17.9 per cent at Barclays. If you do not take insurance, you will repay a total of £6,868 at the Abbey, £468 less than at Barclays. The monthly payments are £190.78 and £203.78 respectively.

Some institutions, including the Halifax, offer special loyalty deals for existing customers. The greater the number of your relationships with the Halifax, the lower the rate you pay. If you have both a Halifax mortgage and a current account, the APR for a £5,000 loan will be 13.9 per cent. Over the three-year period, you will repay £6,229 if you do not take insurance. The monthly payment is £173.03.

Being a Halifax customer of more than six months' standing, whether as a borrower or as a saver, also allows you a discount on the bank's loans. The APR on a £5,000 loan is 15.9 per cent, with a monthly repayment (without insurance) of £177.32 and a total repayment of £6,383.52.

However, aspiring borrowers should not be overcome by these rewards for constancy. Arranging a loan over the telephone currently appears to guarantee some of the lowest rates. Direct Line, the insurance company, now makes loans available to non-customers at below average rates. Its APR for the £5,000 loan is 12.8 per cent, with a monthly repayment of £166.38 (without insurance).

Moneyfacts, the interest rate data provider, lists as its other telephone best buys the Bank of Scotland (Banking Direct) with an APR of 12.9 per cent and Sainsbury's Bank with an APR of 13.6 per cent.

■ **Credit cards:** Card companies love to lend money to the free-spending but essentially creditworthy individual with a regular salary and a home of his own. To lure such a lucrative proposition, they will accept a transfer of debt from another card company.

Most card rates are higher than the typical personal loan rate. But the new, often American-owned card companies, not only have lower rates but also bargain charges for new customers.

Barclaycard's APR is 22.90 per cent. Capital One Bank has an introductory rate of 7.9 per cent. Its usual rate is 17.9 per cent. The Co-operative Bank's introductory rate is also 7.9 per cent, increasing to 10.9 per cent.

The savings to be made are substantial. Borrowing £3,000 over six months on the RBS Advanta card, a joint venture between The Royal Bank of Scotland and Advanta, an American card group, and you will pay £145.04 in interest. This is less than half the cost of borrowing the same sum on a Barclaycard, where you will pay £319 in interest.

Decision time for BZW investors

People who invested in BZW Convertible Investment Trust have until Friday to decide where to place their money when the fund closes.

BZW is winding up a £100 million investment trust only seven years after its launch following poor investment returns and the ballooning cost of servicing a £20 million loan.

The BZW Convertible Trust, one of only four managed by BZW, is offering its thousands of small shareholders a choice of switching to shares in either the City Merchants Trust, an investment trust run by Invesco, the rival fund manager; or the Invesco High Income Unit Trust; or a cash exit route via an Invesco money fund. City analysts expect most investors to take the cash option. If shareholders do nothing, their money will automatically be transfered to the Invesco unit trust.

BZW, which earned £632,000 managing the trust last year, admits that while it has achieved high income, at around 7-9 per cent a year, capital growth has been poor. Over the year to July 31, the trust's asset value rose by only 2.5 per cent, compared with an increase in the FTSE All-share index of 25 per cent.

BZW Convertible Investment Trust shareholders will also receive a letter today offering them the opportunity to invest in a tracker fund and remain clients of Barclays Global Investment by putting their holdings in the first Internet-based unit trust and Pep. The CF netPep Tracker Fund, managed by BGI, is wooing BZW convertible investment trust holders by not charging them initial fees.

Richard Carswell, a spokesman for netPep, said the savings were possible by marketing and promoting netPep via the Internet to avoid the high costs of conventional advertising. Ian Millward of Chase de Vere said: "My advice in this case would be to take the cash offer from the BZW and take the opportunity to reassess the situation. There is no way you would get high income from a tracker fund but there is nothing wrong with trackers. It just boils down to the position of the individual investor."

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Elderly breathe a sigh of relief

Hundreds of thousands of with-profit bondholders breathed a sigh of relief this week as the Government announced that it was abandoning radical plans to reform the taxation of life policies.

Last November the Inland Revenue threatened to stop the practice of "top slicing" on with-profit bonds, which allows people to withdraw 5 per cent annual income from their bonds but have it treated as return of capital.

Elderly people have found top-slicing useful for keeping their taxable income below £15,600. Income above this amount triggers reductions in their age allowance. Many higher rate taxpayers have used with-profit bonds in this way to defer taxation until they retire, when they may be taxed at a lower rate. In all, 640,000 people have pumped £20 billion into bonds for this reason.

A second controversial proposal was to replace the practice of pre-certifying life policies as tax-exempt with a system of exit testing. Although the idea had merits, its effect was that people would be in the dark about whether their savings would be taxed until their policies matured.

Policyholders, financial advisers and insurers united to protest to the Inland Revenue, which wanted to implement these changes on existing policies. Opponents argued that this amounted to retrospective action by the taxman and confounded people's best expectations when they took out the policies.

This week Dawn Primarolo, Financial Secretary to the Treasury, said the Government had decided not to proceed with the proposals in the light of the responses it had received. However, it is determined to close loopholes such as the dead settlor rule, which allows partners of people who have had a bond written in trust to receive tax-free income once that person dies. Another area of longstanding concern is the use of policies written offshore. The Revenue received a setback this year when the High Court ruled that it could not tax expats when they returned to the UK.

The scale of the Revenue's climbdown surprised many. Charles Levett-Scrivener of Towry Law, the financial adviser, said: "You could have knocked me down with a feather! The key issue here is that the average person needs simple clear rules. The problem with the original Revenue proposals is that they were going to be very complicated and in light of self-assessment I think they felt they were going to create a rod for their own back."

The upshot of all this is that with-profit bonds remain an attractive investment as insurers smooth the returns from the stock market and lock in growth with annual bonuses. Since the Budget they have also become slightly cheaper than unit trusts, although the tax advantages of Peps beat bonds hands-down. Mr Levett-Scrivener says the trend towards consolidation in the insurance industry is producing fewer, but financially stronger, companies. Greater financial strength allows insurers to invest more in equities, which should give policyholders better returns in the future. For a free guide to with-profit bonds contact Towry Law: 0345 868 244.

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هكذا من الإصل

Sunshine estate: when getting away from it all proves too difficult try a Holiday Property Bond, but don't expect a high return on your investment

Investments in paradise

Clare Stewart reports on the holiday bonds that can be less attractive than they first appear

The suntan has faded, the duty-free gin bought with the last pesetas has run out and no one else wants to see your fine rolls of holiday snaps. Time perhaps to start planning the next vacation.

For those who like to book early, before the ink has dried on the brochure page, the chance to plan ahead, even years in advance, might be tempting. One option that is widely advertised is the Holiday Property Bond. Backed by pictures of sun-kissed villas and glowing words of approval from the travel veteran Judith Chalmers, this offers investors a stake in a wide range of holiday properties across the UK and the rest of Europe together with rent-free holidays every year. The bond is a unitised investment and includes a life assurance element.

Villa Owners Club, the private company behind the Holiday Property Bond, is keen to make it plain that it is not offering a timeshare. Bondholders are not tied to any one property and do not pay a fixed management charge. There is a minimum investment of £2,000. Each pound is translated into an equivalent number of points with holidays priced in points. In addition the bondholders pay a "no profit user charge" per week to cover overheads such as cleaning and maintaining the property.

The bond, which is issued by Isle of Man Assurance, was launched in 1983 and currently there are 23,000 bondholders choosing from around 800 properties. These range from cottages at Gleneagles to apartments in Tampa Bay, Florida. There are also specially adapted apartments for wheelchair users.

A £6,000 investment (the average) translated into 6,000 points would, for example, allow you to rent a one-bedroom studio for a week in mid-April in Stigliano, a restored medieval village in Tuscany, or a one-bedroom apartment in Tenerife for two weeks in August.

An investment of more than £5,547 brings added benefits, such as the opportunity to take up holidays that are unbooked paying only in user charges, as well as special deals on long-stay bookings out of season.

The virtue of the bond, says the group, is that "you are protected against inflation in the cost of holiday accommodation for life". The points rating for properties is index-linked to take inflation and replacement building costs into consideration. Bondholders' points allocation is adjusted in the same way, up or down, according to the change.

Weekly charges for overseas properties are made in the local currency and translated into sterling two months before the holiday begins, so there might be fluctuations between booking and paying. Current charges for UK properties range from £111 to £238 per week plus VAT.

However, while the quality and range of holidays on offer wins praise, the bond's performance as an investment looks less impressive. Launched at 88p in 1984, the current selling price is quoted as 68p. This price is based on the total property valuation, which is reassessed annually, and the value of investment in securities.

The unit price performance, according to Nicholas Beamish, a Villa Owners director, reflects a number of factors. "European property values have been marked down," he said. "The bond does have a large amount of its investment tied up in new projects that are not yet valued."

Forty per cent of the bond's assets are invested in securities by the Midland Bank Trust Corporation (Isle of Man), which is the company's trustee and securities manager. The bias of securities, says Mr Beamish, is now moving away from fixed interest investments towards a greater exposure to equity markets. Bondholders can bequeath their investment but cannot sell to another investor. Bonds can only be cashed after two years. Although at present it takes around six weeks to realise the money, the length of time may vary and the company reserves the right to defer it for up to a year. Encashment levels are running at around £1.3 million this year. Last year they stood at £1.4 million compared with sales of £16 million.

While the range of properties to rent looks attractive, potential investors should consider what exactly they are spending their money on. Is this the kind of holiday and cost that they would want to commit themselves to? Don't forget in doing the sums to add on the weekly user charges, travel cost to get to the sites, and expenditure on self-catering. It is also important to look at the real value of the bond as a longer-term investment.

As James Higgins, director of Chamberlain de Broe, the financial adviser, notes: "Investing in properties would usually be regarded as a speculative move." However, in the rest of Europe, where there is more emphasis on renting than buying houses, the property markets have not seen the same kind of growth as in the UK. In addition, says Mr Higgins, while the holiday and investment package makes a good sales story, there is no strong correlation between the two as far as the investor is concerned.

The bondholder is effectively buying the right to a series of discounts on holidays in the future but for which they are paying in advance while, on past performance at least, not seeing much of an investment return.

However, if your holiday time is restricted and you want your money to work harder, you may be better off paying for holidays in the usual way, even taking into account annual price increases, while your money earns a higher rate of return invested elsewhere.

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The value of investments and any income from them can go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. Taxes relating to PEPs may change if the law changes and the value of tax relief depends on the circumstances of the investor. We will not be offering any advice as to the suitability of the PEPs we are marketing. PEPs are not suitable for everyone. If you have any doubt whether an investment is suitable for you, you should obtain expert advice. The Chancellor announced in his 1997 Budget that the tax treatment of PEPs will change in April 1999.

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South West: 0117 930 8827 North: 0113 239 1941 Scotland: 0141 353 0311

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Beale Dobie

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Open a One Year Fixed Rate Bond from Britannia and you could be looking at some very big returns indeed.

You'll get an extremely competitive interest rate for a minimum £5,000 investment, and better still, the more you can invest the higher the rate you'll earn.

MINIMUM BALANCE	GROSS* INTEREST pa
£100,000+	7.50%
£20,000	7.30%
£5,000	7.20%

The Bond is ideal if you have capital you won't need to access for a year. It's wise to invest as much as you can because additional deposits can't be made following your initial investment. The Bond is also such a competitive offer that the issue has to be limited.

The One Year Fixed Rate Bond is an excellent way to see a substantial return in a short space of time - so why not visit your local branch or call for an application pack today? After all, the sooner you open a Bond, the sooner you'll be enjoying the rewards.

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9am - 7pm weekdays and 9am - 12 noon Saturdays.

Quoting ref: 244 FRB

Britannia The Sharing Society

Britannia Building Society Britannia House Leek Staffordshire ST13 5RG

*7.50% gross (without UK income tax deducted) fixed interest for investments of £100,000+. Interest is paid on maturity. No withdrawals permitted during 1 year term. Interest will be payable net of the applicable rate of income tax (which may be reclaimed by non-taxpayers) or gross, subject to the required registration. Rates correct at time of going to press.

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7.06% p.a. Estimated Income Yield.
6.56% Estimated Gross Redemption Yield.
As at 3.9.97.%‡

For more information call us now*, or send back the coupon below.

0345 6789 10

Quote reference no. 271BG1

SCOTTISH WIDOWS

Please return this coupon to: Scottish Widows, Customer Services Department, FREEPOST EH2920, 16 Bernard Street, Edinburgh EH6 6PP.

Mr/Mrs/Miss/Ms (please delete as appropriate) Surname First Name(s)

Address

Postcode

Telephone No. Work Home Date of Birth / / Male ☐ Female ☐

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We will never make your name and address available to other organisations. However, we will occasionally tell you about our other products and services which we believe will be of interest to you. If you would prefer not to receive this information, please tick this box. ☐ Reference Number: 271BG1

‡The Gross Redemption Yield takes account of the capital repayments at maturity of the bonds held in the portfolio as well as income payments. The value of units and any income from them may go down as well as up and investors may not get back the amount originally invested. More than 35% in value of the fund's investments may consist of Government and other public securities issued by the same issuer(s). Tax assumptions are subject to statutory change and the value to an investor of any tax advantages depends on personal circumstances. The tax treatment of PEPs will change in April 1999. With a building society deposit account your capital is secure. *For your protection your calls to Scottish Widows may be recorded or monitored. Issued by Scottish Widows Investment Management Limited. Regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO.

هكذا من الإصل

THE TIMES MONEY INFORMATION SERVICE

Action to avoid winter's ravages

The storm of October 16, 1987, resulted in insurance claims totalling a massive £1.6 million. Although such extreme weather is highly unusual in the UK, Age Concern Insurance Services believes that homeowners should undertake a few low-cost preventive measures before winter to avoid damage to their property. A guide has been produced that explains what to do in situations such as a pipe bursting or freezing, if your house suffers storm damage, or if you are away from home for a long period during winter. For a free copy, call 0345 697610.

☐ The 1998 edition of *Choosing Your Independent School* is now available and contains fully updated details of more than 1,300 schools, with information on school size, type, location, subjects taught, religious affiliation, sports and facilities, plus full A-level, GCSE, GNQ and Scottish exam listings. The book is available from bookshops or the Independent Schools Information Service, tel. 0171 630 8793, at £9.50 plus postage.

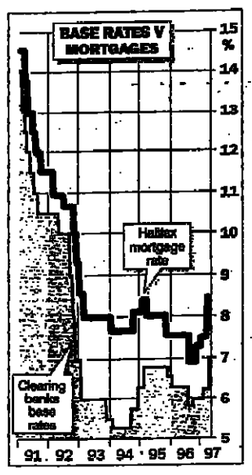
☐ Whether you are considering buying shares for the first time, or already own shares, perhaps through a privatisation, building society conversion or in a Pep, *Understand Shares in a Day* provides a good explanation of how the market works. The book reveals why shares fluctuate, how to select a broker, how to buy and sell shares, and the risks and rewards of Penny Shares. More complex areas of share ownership are also covered, such as how to value shares, and strategies for volatile or falling markets. Available to *Times* readers at a reduced price of £5 (including p&p). Send cheques, made payable to TTL, to PO Box 200, Harrogate, HG1 2YR.

☐ *Your Complete Guide to Home Insurance* highlights what to look out for when choosing a policy to protect your property and possessions. The booklet explains how a premium will be rated based on details such as the number of bedrooms, postcode, replacement value "as new" of your contents and valuables. A section is included which shows how to calculate the rebuilding cost of your house. Available free from branches of the Britannia Building Society.

LIZANNE ROSE

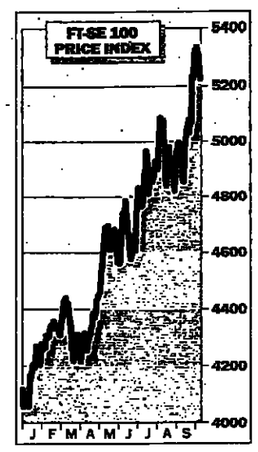
SAVERS' BEST BUYS

INSTANT ACCESS ACCOUNTS	Account	Notice of term	Deposit	Rate	Interest paid
Sainsbury's Bank 0500 405060	Instant Access	Instant	£1	6.50	Yly
C&G 0800 742437	Inst Transfer	InstantB	£1,000	7.00	Yly
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200	Direct Access	Postal	£2,500	7.05	Yly
First National BS 0800 558844	Direct Access	PostalB	£5,000	7.45	Yly
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS	**Account**	**Notice of term**	**Deposit**	**Rate**	**Interest paid**
Leeds & Holbeck BS 0500 225777	Albion 30	30 day p	£10,000	7.20	Yly
Chelsea BS 0800 132351*	POST-tel 40	40 day p	£5,000	7.30	Yly
Coventry BS 0345 665522	Postal 50	50 day p	£5,000	7.35	Yly
Legal & General Bank 0500 111200	60 Direct	60 day p	£10,000	7.60	Yly
FIRST TESSAS (TAX FREE)	**Account**	**Notice of term**	**Deposit**	**Rate**	**Interest paid**
Yorkshire BS 0800 378836		5 year	£2,000	7.65	Yly
Principality BS 01222 344188		5 year	£2,500	7.65	Yly
Hanley Economic BS 0800 838811		5 year	£1,000	7.60	Yly
Sun Banking Corp 01438 744505		5 year	£3,000	7.60	Yly



CREDIT CARDS BEST BUYS

CREDIT CARDS	Card type	Interest per month	APR%	Fee per annum
Capital One Bank 0800 669000	Visa	0.64%N	7.90%N	Nil
Co-operative Bank 0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.64%NC	7.90%N	Nil
Robert Fleming/S&P 0800 829400	Base Rt Lnkd M/V	1.00%C	12.70%	Nil



PERSONAL LOANS BEST BUYS

PERSONAL LOANS	APR	Monthly payment on £5,000 for 3yrs with insurance	no insurance
Direct Line 0181 680 9966	12.80%A	£183.75	£166.38
Capital One Direct 0800 216252	12.90%	£189.48	£166.54
Alliance & Leic Grp 0990 626262	13.30%	£187.73	£167.56

NB. A = Minimum age 22 years, B = Withdrawals via Bank Clearing System, C = no interest free period, N = Introductory rate for a limited period, P = By Post only

* RATES SHOWN ARE GROSS AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE WITHOUT NOTICE
PLEASE CHECK RATES BEFORE INVESTING

Source: MoneyFacts, the Monthly Guide to Investment & Mortgage Rates (01692 500 677)

NATIONAL SAVINGS

	Gross rate	At tax rates 20%	40%	Min/maximum investment £	Notice	Contact
Ordinary A/c[1]	1.50	1.20	0.90	10-10,000**		0645 645000
Investment A/c*s	4.75	3.80	2.85	20-500***[7]	1mth	0645 645000
Income Bond*[4]	6.50	5.20	3.90	2,000-25,000***	3mth	0645 645000
First Opt Bond[4]	6.25	5.00	3.75	1,000-20,000***		0645 645000
44th Issue Cert†[2]	5.35			100-10,000	9day	0645 645000
Children's Bond†	6.75			25-1,000	1mth	0645 645000
Gen Ext Rate	3.51					0645 645000
Capital Bonds[4]	6.65	5.32	3.99	100-250,000	8day	0645 645000
11th Ind Linked†[3]	2.75			100-10,000	8day	0645 645000
Pensnrs Bond S3[4]	7.00	5.60	4.20	500-50,000[5]	60day	0645 645000

[1] first £70 (£140 jt) of int tax free, inst accs for up to £100 * Unlimited additional hldgs for reinvested proceeds †Tax free *Rates gross and vble [4]Guaranteed when held for 5 years *0.2% net bonus for £20,000+ *£100,000 jt in addition to S1 and S2 holdings *Taxable but cred in full. [5]£500-100,000 earn higher rates. **Tiered rates apply

PENSION ANNUITIES

All figures are the gross annual annuity (£100,000 purchase), guaranteed 5 years, paid monthly in advance

SINGLE LIFE (level ann)	Male: Age 60	Age 65	Age 70
Sun Life .....Level	£9,135	£10,257	£11,772
Standard Life .....Level	£9,044	£10,136	£11,564
Canada Life.....Level	£8,962	£10,060	£11,551
NPI .....Level	£9,021	£10,052	£11,436
Sun Lf of Can.....Level	£8,988	£10,050	£11,494
SINGLE LIFE	**Female: Age 60**	**Age 65**	**Age 70**
Sun Life .....Level	£8,314	£9,123	£10,283
Prudential .....Level	£8,276	£9,098	£10,298
Canada Life .....Level	£8,252	£9,081	£10,284
NPI .....Level	£8,304	£9,062	£10,143
Scottish Widows ..Level	£8,300	£9,020	£10,080
JOINT LIFE, 2/3 WIDOWS (level annuity)	**Male: Age 60 / Female: Age 55**	**Age 65 / Age 60**	**Age 70 / Age 65**
Sun Life .....Level	£7,918	£8,557	£9,452
Sun Lf of Can.....Level	£7,838	£8,435	£9,577
NPI .....Level	£7,587	£8,405	£9,243
Equitable Life .....Level	£7,807	£8,384	£9,197
Scottish Widows ..Level	£7,862	£8,362	£9,060

Source: Annuity Direct (0171 684 5000)

Statistics compiled by Lizanne Rose

GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS

ANNUAL INCOME

Rates as at October 9, 1997

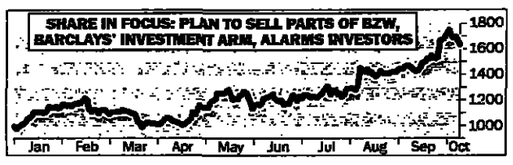
	Investment (£)	Company	Standard Rate (%)
1 Year			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.10
	5,000	AIG Life	6.27
	10,000	GE Fin Assur	6.75
2 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.70
	10,000	Hambro Assured	6.40
	20,000	Hambro Assured	6.55
	50,000	Hambro Assured	6.60
3 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.60
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.30
	20,000	Hambro Assured	6.40
4 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.85
	3,000	ITT London & Ed	6.35
5 Years			
	1,000	Hambro Assured	5.70
	3,000	Pinnacle Insur	6.35

Source: Chamberlain de Broë 0171-434 4222. Net rates. Income and capital guaranteed. Early surrender. Terms vary. Monthly income may be available.

PIBS

FIXED RATE	Gross coupon	Buying price	% Gross yield	Issue price	Minimum purchase amount
Birmingham Midshires	9.375%	125.50	7.429	100.17	1,000
Bradford & Bingley	11.625%	152.10	7.643	100.13	10,000
Bradford & Bingley	13.000%	170.57	7.621	100.20	10,000
Britannia	13.000%	170.13	7.641	100.42	1,000
Coventry	12.125%	160.04	7.508	100.75	1,000
First National	11.750%	151.87	7.737	100.25	10,000
Leeds & Holbeck	13.375%	176.16	7.593	100.23	1,000
Newcastle	10.750%	140.84	7.583	100.32	1,000
Newcastle	12.625%	166.32	7.591	100.45	1,000
Northern Rock	12.625%	164.82	7.660	100.14	1,000
Skipton	12.875%	169.60	7.591	100.48	1,000
FLOATING RATE	**Gross coupon**	**Buying price**	**Issue price**	**Minimum purchase**	
Cheshire (30/09-27/03)	9.04063%	120.00	100.00	1,000	
First Nat(22/09-20/03)	9.98359%	105.00	100.00	1,000	

PIBS = Permanent interest-bearing shares
Source ABN AMRO Hoare Govett — 0171 601 0101



LARGER LENDERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Chelsea 0800 291291	5.39	£20-150k	80	Fixed to 1.8.99
Nationwide 0800 302010	5.75	to £300k	90	2.35% disc for 2 years
Yorkshire 0800 378836	4.95	£25-150k	95	3% discount for 1 year
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 mths 3% disc-6 mths
Bristol & West 01179 792222	2.90	No max	90	2.90% discount to 1.11.98

LARGER LOANS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Nottingham Imper. 0115 9817220	0.75	£25-150k	75	Fixed at 0.75% to 31.1.98
Leeds & Holbeck 0113 225 7777	1.20	to £180k	95	7% disc-6 mths, 1% disc-12 mths
Scarborough 0990 133149	1.20	£15-100k	95	6.99% dsc-6 mth 2%-8mth,0.5%-1y
Banks				
Bank of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 mths 3% disc-6 mths
Bristol & West 01179 792222	2.90	no max	90	Fixed at 2.90% to 1.11.98

FIRST-TIME BUYERS

Lender	Interest rate %	Loan size	Max %	Notes
Building Societies				
Newbury 01635 43676	4.85	£30-100k	95	3% discount for 1 year
Mansfield 01246 202055	2.20	£25-250k	90	6% discount-6 mth Further dsc apply
Clay Cross 01246 862120	5.25	£15-100k	95	3% discount for 12 months
Banks				
Bnk of Ireland 01189 510100	0.99	£20-145k	95	Fixed 6 mths, 3% disc 6 mths
Halifax plc 01422 333333	5.45	£25-250k	95	3% disc-30.9.99, .5%overSVR-10.04

Larger lenders, loans and first-time buyers tables by Blay's Guides Ltd (01753 880482)

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UNIT-LINKED INSURANCE INVESTMENTS

	Bid	Offer	Wkly +/-	Yld %
AEGON LIFE ASSURANCE Edinburgh Park, Edinburgh. EH12 9SE 0131 339 9191				
Balanced	587.70	622.00	- 5.00	...
UK Equity	809.60	856.90	- 5.30	...
Property	447.90	474.00	- 0.90	...
Fixed Interest	376.30	398.30	- 3.90	...
Money	274.90	295.20	- 0.90	...
International	482.90	511.10	- 0.50	...
ABBEY LIFE Helsinburn Road, Bournemouth BH8 8AL 01202 292373				
Custodian S4	219.10	230.70	- 0.40	...
Ethical S4	178.90	188.20	- 0.50	...
International S4	239.50	252.20	- 2.70	...
Protected Gth S4	131.10	139.00	- 0.40	...
Asian Pacific	199.80	210.40	- 7.90	...
European S4	273.10	287.50	- 4.70	...
Prop Fd Ser 4	438.40	461.50	- 0.70	...
Equity Ser 4	319.30	336.20	- 2.30	...
Man Ser 4	890.60	937.50	- 6.00	...
Curr Ser 4	366.30	385.60	- 0.40	...
Money Ser 4	365.90	385.20	- 0.40	...
Fixd Int Ser 4	436.30	459.30	- 3.50	...
American Ser 4	870.00	915.90	+11.00	...
High Inc Ser 4	992.10	1044.40	- 5.70	...
Indexed Inv Ser 4	251.10	264.40	- 1.80	...
Japan Ser 4	283.60	298.60	- 1.70	...
ALBANY LIFE 3 Darkes Lane, Potters Bar EN6 1AJ 01707 42311				
Equity Fd Acc	2262.80	2381.90	-22.70	...
European Fd Acc	582.50	613.10	-11.30	...
Fixed Int Acc	617.80	650.20	- 5.20	...
Gtd Money Acc	372.70	392.20	- 0.30	...
Intl Managed Acc	863.30	908.90	- 9.70	...
Inc Fxd Int Acc	381.50	401.50	- 2.50	...
Japan Fund	252.30	265.50	- 2.10	...
N American Acc	522.10	549.60	- 3.40	...
Prop Fd Acc	507.40	534.20	- 1.30	...
Multiple Inv Acc	1384.00	1456.80	-11.20	...
ALLIED DUNBAR ASSURANCE Swindon, SN1 1EL 01793 514514				
Fxd Int Dep Acc	418.80	441.90	- 0.50	...
Equity Acc	2021.70	2129.20	-26.40	...
Property Acc	723.90	762.20	- 0.80	...
Far East Acc	309.50	325.80	- 8.60	...
Managed Capital	697.40	734.20	- 8.20	...
-do- Acc	1513.00	1592.70	-17.30	...
Overseas Acc	1448.40	1524.70	-18.70	...
Gilt Edged Acc	614.70	647.10	- 3.60	...
Amer Equity Acc	1421.40	1496.30	- 9.70	...
Amer Man Acc	585.40	616.30	- 0.50	...
Amer Prop Acc	119.80	125.10	- 0.60	...
Distribution Bonds	27.80	29.30	- 0.10	...
AXA EQUITY & LAW LIFE ASSURANCE Amersham Road, High Wycombe, Bucks 01494 463463				
Reserve Ser 6	188.10	198.00	- 0.40	...
Balced Ser 6	1077.20	1080.21	- 7.40	...
Opportunity Ser 6	233.50	245.70	- 2.30	...
Distribution Ser 6	113.00	118.90	- 0.40	6.20
UK Equities Ser 6	1540.60	1621.60	-10.40	...
Higher Inc Ser 6	1570.70	1654.40	- 4.60	...
North Amer Ser 6	742.40	781.80	+ 0.90	...
Far East Ser 6	584.10	576.90	- 8.60	...
Europe Ser 6	597.20	628.60	- 8.20	...
Intnl Ser 6	773.80	814.50	- 7.70	...
Property Ser 6	632.20	665.40	- 2.20	...
Fixed Int Ser 6	520.30	558.10	- 4.30	...
Ind-Linkd Sec Se	217.30	228.70	+ 1.00	...
Gtred Dep Ser 6	333.60	351.10	+ 0.40	...
BARCLAYS LIFE 252 Romford Road, London E7 9JB 0181 534 5544				
Equity Acc	1308.60	1377.50	-16.10	...
-Gilt Edged Acc	792.30	823.90	- 9.60	...
Gilt Edged Acc	488.30	514.00	- 3.20	...
-do- Initial	294.50	310.10	- 1.90	...
International Acc	505.30	531.90	- 6.60	...
-do- Initial	302.90	318.90	- 3.90	...
Managed Acc	732.50	771.10	- 8.10	...
-do- Initial	440.70	463.90	- 4.90	...
Money Acc	325.30	342.50	+ 0.30	...
Property Acc	340.20	358.20	+ 0.50	...
-do- Initial	204.00	214.80	+ 0.10	...
America Acc	489.70	515.50	+ 1.00	...
Far East Growth	231.40	244.00	- 5.10	...
Financial Acc	592.20	623.40	-10.50	...
500 Accum	554.90	589.40	+ 5.50	...
Japan Acc	225.40	237.30	- 2.00	...
Income Acc	757.20	797.10	- 5.50	...
Special Sits Acc	401.40	422.60	- 4.70	...
Unit Tech Acc	210.60	221.70	- 2.60	...
BLACK HORSE LIFE Mountbatten House, Chatham, Kent ME4 4JF 01634 830000				
The Managed Fd	1105.33	1105.33	- 7.91	...
Income Fund	1107.48	1165.77	-11.22	...
Extra Income	992.20	1044.43	- 8.90	...
Worldwide Gth	638.74	672.36	- 0.06	...
Balanced Fund	969.01	1020.02	- 7.07	...
Smlr Cos Recov	1129.94	1188.44	+14.05	...
N Amer & Genrl	584.87	615.60	- 0.56	...
Pacific Basin	371.00	390.53	-22.05	...
German Growth	326.26	343.44	- 1.07	...
Japan Growth	153.21	161.38	+ 1.24	...
The UK Gilt Fd	314.61	331.17	- 2.86	...
Intnl Euro Gth	202.04	212.68	- 1.36	...
Property Fund	441.35	464.58	- 0.69	...
Fixed Interest	409.07	430.60	- 4.17	...
Cash Fund	316.02	332.66	+ 0.30	...
Managed Inc	646.04	680.57	- 4.00	...
With Amer Recov	397.11	418.12	+ 8.65	...
Annuit Fund				
Managed Gnth	509.27	536.08	- 8.47	...
BRITANNIA 90 Bothwell St, Glasgow G2 6HR 0141 248 2800				
Measured Perf	235.00	248.70	- 4.90	...
Performance Plus	273.30	289.20	- 4.80	...
With Profit Perf	197.03	209.01	+ 0.20	...
UK Opportunity	309.30	327.20	- 7.10	...
Euro Opportunity	313.00	352.30	- 4.70	...
North Amer Opp	317.20	335.80	- 3.20	...
Far East Opp	208.00	220.10	- 5.10	...
Gwth Prop Ser 1	184.60	194.40		...
Gth Prop Ser 2	216.30	228.90		...
Fixed Int	254.20	269.00	- 1.60	...
Cash	176.95	187.10	+ 0.10	6.49
Overseas	315.00	333.30	- 5.60	...
Formerly LAS				
Managed Fund	492.20	518.20	- 9.20	...
UK Equity	935.60	984.90	-21.50	...
Property	296.60	314.40		...
Money Market	260.30	295.10	+ 0.20	...
Fixed Interest	364.30	386.60	- 2.40	...
Japan	308.90	325.20	- 3.20	...
North America	282.40	297.30	- 2.40	...
International	486.70	512.40	- 8.60	...
European	425.80	448.30	- 6.00	...
Far East	154.00	162.20	- 3.80	...
CANADA LIFE 24 High Street, Potters Bar, Herts EN6 5BA 01707 51122				
Managed	453.70	477.60	- 3.20	...
Property	293.80	309.30	+ 0.10	...
Gilt & Fxd Int	293.50	309.00	- 2.20	...
Equity	570.00	600.01	- 4.30	...
Cash	239.30	251.90	+ 0.30	...
CLife Euro Mgd	536.20	564.50	- 7.07	...
CLife Intl Fd	403.70	425.00	- 3.80	...
Managed Fund	968.50	1019.50	- 6.90	...
Property Fund	593.40	624.60	+ 0.60	...
Equity Fund	1476.60	1483.60	-10.60	...
Gilt Edged Fd	757.20	797.00	- 5.60	...
Deposit Fund	369.60	389.00	+ 0.30	...
Investment Fd	629.90	654.20	- 5.90	...
International	842.50	876.30	- 6.20	...
CITY OF WESTMINSTER ASSURANCE Sentry House, 500 Avebury Blvd, Milton Keynes MK9 2NU. 01908 606101				
Property Fund	190.90	201.00		...
Managed Fund	895.00	940.00	- 2.00	...
Equity Fund	554.70	583.90	- 1.50	...
CLERICAL MEDICAL/FIDELITY INVESTMENTS Narrow Plain, Bristol BS2 0JH. 0117 9230566				
Assurance Funds				
Sapphire Mixed	394.90	415.70	- 1.80	...
Ruby	220.70	232.40	+ 0.50	...
Emerald	171.20	180.30	- 0.30	...
Equity	484.20	509.70	- 2.60	...
Property	252.00	265.30	+ 0.60	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	254.90	268.40	- 1.20	...
Indexed Sers	200.50	211.10	+ 0.90	...
Cash	208.50	219.50	+ 0.20	...
Nth American	394.40	415.20	+ 5.40	...
Far East	286.90	301.50	- 2.60	...
International	313.00	329.50	- 1.20	...
Special Sits	514.20	541.30	+ 5.30	...
Intl Income	441.50	464.80	- 2.00	...
Euromonis	510.00	536.90	- 1.20	...
Japanese	118.70	125.00	+ 2.60	...
SE Asia	394.40	415.20	-11.90	...
With Profits Reg	196.20	206.60	+ 0.20	...
-do- Spec	196.20	206.60	+ 0.20	...
Flexible Retirement Plans Funds				
Mixed	475.30	500.40	- 2.70	...
Equity	630.30	663.40	- 4.20	...
Property	235.40	247.80	+ 0.20	...
Gilt & Fixed Int	338.30	353.00	- 2.90	...
Index Linked	216.10	227.50	+ 1.00	...
Cash	288.60	304.00	+ 0.10	...
Nth American	499.70	526.10	+ 6.90	...
Far East Acc	308.50	324.80	+ 0.70	...
International Acc	391.40	412.10	- 2.70	...
Special Sits	796.00	837.90	+10.50	...
European Flex	762.70	802.90	-10.30	...
COLONIAL MUTUAL GROUP Colonial Mutual House, Chatham Maritime, Kent ME4 4YY. 01634 890 000				
(Units). Key 1	577.82	...	- 7.00	...
-do- Pacemaker 1	438.72	...	-17.33	...
-do- Cash	234.55	238.37		...
-do- Equity	791.90	833.58		...
-do- Fxd Int	447.94	471.52		...
-do- Managed	556.57	586.18		...
-do- Property	388.62	410.60		...
(Pens) Cash Cap	218.25	229.79		...
-do- Cash Inv	352.90	371.39		...
-do- Equity Cap	2102.88	2214.63		...
-do- Equity Inv	3400.92	3579.92		...
-do- Fixed Cap	483.29	508.73		...
-do- Fixed Inv	781.23	822.36		...
-do- Index Cap	227.01	238.97		...
-do- Index Inv	300.97	386.29		...
-do- Mngd Cap	815.98	858.93		...
-do- Mngd Inv	1319.02	1388.45		...
COMMERCIAL UNION St Helen's, 1 Undershaft, EC3 0171 283 7500				
Var Ann Acc (S)	1183.30	...	- 5.87	...
Var Ann (S) I	129.49	...	- 0.62	...
Prime: Managed	554.10	583.30	- 4.00	...
Prime: UK Equity	745.50	784.80	- 4.90	...
Prime: Int Equity	370.70	391.31	- 4.91	...
Prime: Property	267.81	281.90	+ 0.60	...
Prime: Fxd Int	279.30	294.10	- 1.50	...
Prime Index-Lnk	200.70	211.30	+ 0.70	...
Prime: Cash	229.70	241.80	+ 0.20	...
CONFEDERATION LIFE Lytton Way, Stevenage, Herts SG1 2NN 01438 744940				
Managed Fund	1525.40	1605.60	+27.60	...
Equity II	2377.80	2502.70	+49.30	...
For Crown see Windsor				
EAGLE STAR LIFE ASSURANCE Montpelier Drive, Cheltenham, GL53 7LQ. 01242 221311				
Life Funds				
Ut With Pfts (50ds)	117.10	...	+ 0.10	...
Secure (2) I	111.10	...	+ 0.20	...
Managed (3) I	133.70	...	- 1.20	...
Equity Mngd (3) I	134.70	...	- 1.30	...
Adventurous (3) I	125.30	...	- 1.10	...
Bristol & West (2) I	112.90	...	+ 0.10	...
Equity Mgd S1	325.00	342.20	- 3.50	...
Managed S1	322.20	339.20	- 3.40	...
Adventurous S1	258.50	272.30	- 2.60	...
Managed (2)	218.50	230.00	- 2.30	...
Eagle/Mid Uts	427.30	442.40	- 5.30	0.01
Pension Funds				
Unit With Pfts (5) I	117.40	...	+ 0.20	...
Secure (2) I	111.80	...	+ 0.10	...
Managed (2) I	133.70	...	- 1.60	...
Equity Mngd (2) I	136.30	...	- 1.60	...
Adventurous (2) I	126.50	...	- 1.40	...
Bristol & West (2) I	113.80	...	+ 0.10	...
FRIENDS' PROVIDENT Castle Street, Salisbury, Wilts SP1 3SH 01722 413366				
Managed	432.00	454.80	- 3.80	...
UK Equity	608.70	640.80	- 6.30	...
Viewdrship	504.50	531.10	+ 6.90	...
Overseas Equity	396.30	417.20	- 3.20	...
North American	245.00	257.90	+0.40	...
Pacific Basin	174.90	184.20	- 3.10	...
European	392.60	413.30	- 5.40	...
Property	197.20	207.60		...
Fixed Interest	295.00	310.60	- 2.50	...
Index Linked	199.60	210.20	+ 0.10	...
Cash	224.60	236.50	+ 0.20	...
FP Life Assurance ex NM				
Fixed Interest	654.70	690.00	- 6.50	...
Managed	972.90	1024.10	- 7.50	...
Deposit	384.10	404.30	+ 0.20	...
Property	563.40	593.00	+ 0.90	...
American	688.40	724.60	+ 1.70	...
Australian	738.00	776.80	- 5.60	...
European	933.70	982.80	-14.60	...
Income Acc	1081.30	1138.20	- 7.90	...
-do- Dist	595.30	626.70	- 5.10	4.22
International	418.10	440.10	- 2.70	...
Japan Smaller	309.60	326.10	+ 4.80	...
Singapore & Mal	381.20	401.20	- 7.50	...
Smaller Cos	627.00	660.00	- 3.50	...
Tokyo Fund	413.30	435.00	- 1.90	...
UK Equity	854.50	899.40	- 9.30	...
CCM Vanguard Mg	1061.20	1096.00	- 7.50	...
GT GLOBAL FUND MGMT LTD Allban Gate, 14th Flr, 125 London Wall, Lond EC2Y 5AS. 0171 710 4567				
GT Plan Far East	295.40	311.00	-16.20	...
GT Plan Worldc	621.90	654.70	- 4.20	...
GAN LIFE & PENSIONS Gan House, Harlow, Essex CM20 2SW. 01279 626262				
Portfolio Acc	876.40	876.40	- 5.10	...
-do- Inv A	876.30	922.50	- 5.40	...
UK Equity	587.20	618.52	- 4.90	...
Gilt Plan	239.90	252.60	- 1.50	...
Managed	399.90	420.60	- 2.40	...
GENERAL ACCIDENT 2 Rougier St, York YO1 1HR. 01904 629892				
Managed	286.50	301.50	- 1.80	...
Unitised Profit	167.20	176.00	- 0.20	...
UK Equity	433.60	456.70	- 2.90	...
Fixed Int	235.60	247.90	- 1.80	...
Index-Linked	193.50	203.60	- 1.00	...
Cash Deposit	193.90	204.10	+ 0.20	...
Property	194.50	204.60	+ 0.10	...
International	223.50	235.20	- 1.30	...
American	271.50	285.70	+ 2.40	...
Japan	210.50	221.50	+ 0.30	...
Japan Smllr Cos	215.60	226.80	- 0.30	...
European	268.50	282.50	- 3.80	...
Pacific Fund	271.60	285.80	- 4.30	...
Conv Life	180.70	190.10	+ 1.90	...
Formerly Provident Mutual				
Managed Ord	654.30	688.70	- 4.10	...
Managed Initial	402.20	423.40	- 2.70	...
Equity Ord	1096.00	1153.70	- 7.20	...
Equity Init	673.70	709.20	- 4.80	...
I-Linked Gth Ord	239.90	248.30	- 1.20	...
I-Linked Gth Init	151.50	159.50	- 0.80	...
Overs Equity Ord	477.20	502.30	- 4.10	...
Overs Equity Init	293.30	308.70	- 2.80	...
Property Ord	302.20	318.10	+ 0.30	...
Property Init	185.90	195.60	+ 0.20	...
Fixed Int Ord	344.50	362.60	- 2.70	...
Fixed Int Init	211.80	222.90	- 1.80	...
Deposit

WEEKEND MONEY LETTERS

Hidden forces slowing annuity payouts

From Mr J. Maclaren
Sir, I am writing regarding your two articles ("Time to see sense over annuities" and "Yields hit pensioners", Weekend Money, October 4).

These pieces rightly drew attention to the effect on pensioners of changes in gilt prices. But there is a hidden force at work in the life assurance industry that adds to their predicament: the length of time the insurance companies take to pay out the money from their policyholders' pension plans.

The advice you quote from the Annuity Bureau's Peter Quinton . . . "anyone who has received a firm quote on a higher annuity rate before the EMU report should accept the offer", may be hard to follow.

Annuity quotations are valid for a limited period only, usually 14 days. Yet, large well-known companies with whom a policyholder may have been saving for many years unashamedly state that they need five days to draw a cheque for the pension fund payout. The post adds another two days of delay. This means that a policyholder who wishes to take the "open market option" and have his accumulated pension fund transferred to another company paying a better annuity rate has already lost half of the annuity validity period. The concept of the open market option has now been established for many years but some insurance companies are still only paying lip service to it. It is time they acted in the policyholders' best interests and established procedures and trained their staff to process payouts urgently.
Yours faithfully,
JOHN MACLAREN,
Bee Close House,
Little Preston,
Daventry, Northants.

From Mr M. Woodman
Sir, Marianne Curphey's article ("Get better value when you buy your annuity", Weekend Money, September 27), points out that it takes about ten years for payments from an escalating annuity to catch up with those from a level annuity.

She might well have added that it will take twice as long before the total cash received from an escalating annuity equals the amount received from a fixed annuity — and what about the notional interest on the difference in those early years?

An alternative is the "with profits" annuity.
Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL WOODMAN,
5 Hithersand Close,
Hampton Lucy, Warwick.

Scottish pensioners facing a double tax whammy

From Mr J.G. Campbell
Sir, Dr R. Law (Pensioners deserve to keep their Pep benefits, Weekend Money Letters, September 27) is right to deplore the way in which pensioners will lose out through the ending of Pep tax allowances and the abolition of tax relief on health insurance for those over 60.

He is fortunate to live in England. Pensioners like myself living in Scotland will suffer in the same way but, in addition, will have to pay Scottish income tax on pensions on top of the tax imposed by Westminster — not to mention a 23 per cent increase in council tax here this year. Scottish pensioners are to be an endangered species.
Yours faithfully,
JOHN CAMPBELL,
6a Lennox Court,
18 Stockiemuir Avenue,
Bearsden, Glasgow.

Penalties that punish the wrong party

From Mr E.J. Hart
Sir, When a manufacturer is found guilty of malpractice and in consequence is subject to a fine, the remedy is to increase the price of future products.

When, however, a mutual life assurer, such as Friends Provident is fined, and to the tune of £475,000, there is no such convenient solution, the premiums being fixed, and the mutual funds, the exclusive property of the policyholders, are thus depleted.

Of course, such malpractice must not only be condemned but punished, and severely so, but when innocent policyholders of a non-shareholding office are disadvantaged, an alternative should have been found.

It is entirely wrong that the board, and those of the sales force who were guilty of malpractice, should escape financial responsibility. Public shame is insufficient for the shameful practices perpetrated, and the commissions gained in consequence. A fine of such magnitude is counter-productive, and in no manner reflects the condign punishment merited by those who have brought lasting shame on the pension industry hitherto enjoying deserved public trust.

I am not a policyholder of Friends Provident. If I were, I should be taking advice as to the legality of the fine being paid from mutual funds.
Yours faithfully,
E. HART,
20, Chapelacre Grove,
Helensburgh.

Prize prospects at a premium

From Ms V. Blaber
Sir, Regarding the recent correspondence over Premium Bonds as an investment, one has to consider the worst-case scenario, ie, the probability of not winning a prize.

An investment of £1,000 for a year is more likely not to win a prize (0.532) than to win (0.468). A holding of £5,000 has only 0.231 probability of winning a prize in any month but if kept in for a year has a high probability (0.958) of winning at least one prize.

Even £10,000 is still quite likely not to win a prize in a month (0.591). So like many investments it has to be considered either as a possible return in the long run, or a short-term gamble.
Yours faithfully,
VALERIE BLABER,
65 Seven Sisters Road,
Lower Willingdon,
East Sussex.

Letters or information for Weekend Money may be sent also to *The Times* by fax to 0171-782 5082. Letters should include a daytime telephone number. *The Times* regrets it cannot always give an individual reply or advice and asks that original documents are not sent in.

THE WEEK IN MONEY

OFWAT, the water regulator, launched a fresh attack on dividend payments on Wednesday after publishing figures that showed companies paid out more than £6 billion to shareholders over the past four years.

Ian Byatt, Director-General of Ofwat, voiced his concerns about whether dividends were sustainable and demanded more transparency. He said: "Customers and the regulator want to see where dividends are coming from so that we can be satisfied they are justified." In real terms, dividend payments by water companies have increased 55 per cent since 1992-93.

☐ Ombudsman schemes to deal with consumer complaints are being hampered because too few people know about them, the Consumers' Association says.

According to its report published on Wednesday, more people claimed to have heard of the "Travel Industry Ombudsman" than the Pensions Ombudsman, even though the travel scheme does not exist. The best known scheme, the Banking Ombudsman, was recognised by only 42 per cent of people.

The association also called for regulation of the rapidly rising number of private ombudsman-type schemes and said that unless an agreed standard was drawn up for all ombudsmen, it would be impossible for consumers to know if they were being offered a fair and effective arbitration service.

☐ Headline inflation rose from 3.5 per cent in August to 3.6 per cent in September, the highest level for two years. According to analysts, the surprise rise will increase costs to the social security budget and jeopardise the Government's spending plans.

The total benefits bill will increase by £2 billion in 1998-99, £500 million more than the Government had previously forecast.

☐ About 170,000 British policyholders with Australian Mutual Provident Society, the insurer and fund manager, will receive shares worth, on average, £3,000 when it floats on the Australian and New Zealand stock exchanges next year. Shares are scheduled to be allocated in January and the listing is planned for mid-1998, valuing the company at A$9.4 billion (£4.2 billion).

☐ On Tuesday, Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, met two victims of the pensions mis-selling scandal who have been compensated finally. Christine Culbert, from London, and Stella Gardner, from Poole, Dorset, told her of their years of waiting for settlements from Guardian Financial Services and Abbey Life from whom they bought personal pensions in the late Eighties.

Matthew Wall says good deals are just a few keystrokes away

Search the Net for the latest Pep information

There is now a wealth of information about personal equity plans (Peps) available to investors via the Internet. As long as you have access to a personal computer, a modem, and an Internet service provider, everything you might want to know about Peps is a few keystrokes away.

In April this year there was even a launch of a Pep that is sold exclusively over the Internet, offering lower annual management charges as a result of the lower administration costs.

Typing the phrase "personal equity plans" into an Internet search engine throws up more than 400 relevant sites on the World Wide Web, the Internet's most accessible network. It can appear that everyone wants to tell you about Peps, including independent financial advisers, stockbrokers, performance data providers and, of course, Pep providers themselves.

The best way of sifting through this mountain of electronic financial information is to start at an all-purpose personal finance information site. Good examples of these include Find[1], Money World[2] and Interactive Investor[3].

In among the general personal finance information are sections on Peps, telling you how they work and how they are regulated. There are also links to the Web sites of many of the major Pep providers and comparative performance data on all types of Pep, including the corporate bond, tracker and investment trust varieties.

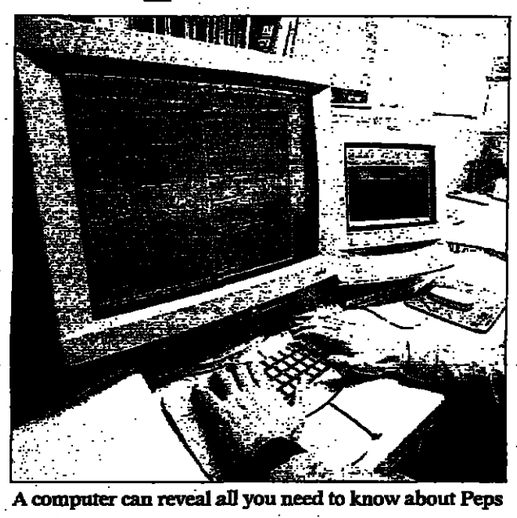
Stockbrokers and IFAs are realising that the Internet allows them to save on the costs associated with paper-based marketing and distribution, although online services are by no means fully electronic yet. Intermediaries can also reach a much wider audience this way and communication can be more direct. Their Web sites are becoming increasingly interactive. For example, Nigel Bourke & Co[4], an IFA based in Stockton-on-Tees, Cleveland, asks potential users of its execution-only service to fill in an online form giving details of the particular Pep they are interested in. It gives a list of 21 major providers. After investors have selected the provider they are interested in and typed in their details, the form can be submitted electronically and the relevant Pep application form returned by post.

NBC Direct, as Nigel Bourke calls its execution-only arm, will rebate all the initial commission it would normally receive from the sale of the Pep. This is commission that investors would normally have to pay even if they bought the Pep direct from the provider.

The beauty of the Internet is that it makes shopping around so much easier for investors, even if a totally electronic process, including application and payment, is still some way off.

Fidelity is blazing a trail in this area. Earlier this year it allowed its customers to pay for their Peps online, using debit card details transmitted over the Internet. Other product providers are bound to follow, once fears about the security and privacy of online payments and applications have been assuaged.

[1] www.find.co.uk
[2] www.moneyworld.co.uk
[3] www.iii.co.uk
[4] www.nigelbourke.co.uk


A computer can reveal all you need to know about Peps

Weekend Money is today publishing a separate guide to investing in personal equity plans

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Direct Line Instant Access Account	
BALANCE	ANNUAL GROSS RATE
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£5,000–£9,999	[illegible]
£10,000–£24,999	[illegible]
£25,000–£49,999	[illegible]
£50,000–£99,999	[illegible]
£100,000+	[illegible]
MORTGAGE RATE	
Direct Line Standard Variable Mortgage Rate	
VARIABLE RATE	[illegible]
APR	[illegible]

All rates correct at 3rd October 1997.

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0181 667 1121 SAVINGS
www.directline.co.uk
A Royal Bank of Scotland company.

Source: Direct Line Financial Services. For further information about either of the Direct Line products listed above, please phone the appropriate number above quoting ref. TTBB26

[illegible] mortgages and savings provided by Direct Line Financial Services Limited, 258 St. Vincent Street, Glasgow, G2 5SH. For savings, deposits and withdrawals via your bank account – [illegible] working days. [illegible] gross rate is the rate paid without deduction of income tax and is based on annual payment of interest. Full terms and conditions of the accounts are available on request. For mortgages, security in the form of a first Legal Charge/Standard Security over the property will be required. Direct Line mortgages from £28,000 to £300,000 are available for up to 50% of the property valuation or purchase price, whichever is the lower. Written quotations available on request. Offers subject to status.
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That sinking feeling: investors who hope to lock in to long-term savings accounts are seeing fixed rates falling fast

Caroline Merrell on the returns savers can expect

Long-term schemes looking vulnerable

The reverberations from recent speculation about Britain's entry into the single currency have begun to be felt in the levels of interest offered on long-term fixed-rate savings accounts.

The returns on these popular savings products reflect the financial markets' view of the future direction of interest rates.

A subtle spin put on the Government's views about the single currency fed to the media earlier this month gave the financial community the reassurance it needed that the UK would join the monetary union, perhaps sooner than expected. Despite the fact that the pound is back at the level it was before the speculation started, the money markets, which are a barometer of future interest rates, now believe that rates will fall sooner rather than later.

Some of the UK's biggest savings institutions have decided to shave the rates off their five and three-year fixed-rate offerings because of the money market reaction.

The Halifax, for instance, has taken nearly 0.5 per cent off the rates on some of its longer-term fixed-rate products.

A spokeswoman said: "Fixed rates are dependent on the rates we can get in the money markets. On the one-year products we have raised rates. On the three- and five-year rates we do have to make some cuts."

For instance, rates on its guaranteed reserve product have fallen by between 0.15 per cent and 0.25 per cent for investments of between £2,000 and £10,000. A three-year guaranteed bond will now pay 6.75 per cent interest; previously the rate was 7 per cent. For investments of greater than £10,000 the rates have been cut by between 0.05 per cent and 0.25 per cent. A sum of £10,000 invested for three years will now attract an interest rate of 7.1 per cent, compared with a previous rate of 6.85 per cent.

The Halifax stepped income reserve account, where rates rise every year for five years, has also suffered from a rate cut. For example, for investments of between £2,000 and £10,000, rates have fallen by around 0.5 per cent. For investments of over £10,000 the rate has fallen by between 0.1 per cent and 0.2 per cent. The rates offered on other fixed-rate savings products are almost sure to follow suit.

Charles Pinder, director of retail savings at Abbey National, claims that UK retail savers are facing something of a difficult choice at the moment. He pointed out that, in normal circumstances, long-term interest rates are higher than short-term interest rates. He said: "It is an inverted yield curve." He pointed out that savers could get some good rates on short-term postal accounts, but this could be folly.

He added: "What the money markets are telling us is what the course of rates is going to be in the future, both in the long term and the short term." He said that savers hoping to lock their savings into the higher rates offered over the shorter term could be disadvantaged. He said: "When their short-term fixed rates end, they could find themselves dropping into a lower variable rate. If they try and fix again over a short term, they could find themselves fixing into a rate that is lower than the longer-term rate they were offered in the first place."

Mr Pinder said the current shape of long and short-term interest rates was extremely unusual. It had only been replicated in 1994, when the UK unexpectedly withdrew from the exchange rate mechanism.

He believes that during next year the position on long and short-term interest rates could go into reverse. He gives warning against savers fixing into high short-term interest rates now, only to lose out when they eventually emerge.

Other financial institutions offering fixed rates savings products include the Alliance & Leicester, Bristol & West, Coventry, Woolwich, Portman and Norwich & Peterborough. The interest rates tend to be around the 7 per cent level, again with the better rates offered over the shorter term. For example: Coventry Building Society offers a three-year bond that has a rate of 7.4 per cent on the minimum balance of £5,000, while balances of greater than £10,000 carry a rate of 7.6 per cent.

The Alliance & Leicester also offers a three-year fixed-rate bond for those who have more than £5,000 to invest. The rate kicks off at 7.1 per cent in the first year, and rises to 7.3 per cent in year three.

Those who are wary about locking up their money for too long a period when interest rates are in such a state of flux, could consider a new account from Flemings Save & Prosper. The Sovereign 30-day notice account offers savers 7.65 gross on balances of over £25,000, smaller balances of between £5,000 and £9,999 attract a 7.2 per cent interest rate.

The rate beats the other returns offered by some of the other UK banks. For example, the Abbey National Investor 90 account attracts an interest of 5.45 per cent on £5,000, while the C&G 90 account attracts interest of 6 per cent on the same amount invested. Sainsbury's instant access account, which has attracted £900 million since launch, earns interest of 6.5 per cent.

Investment taken on trust

If you fear the impact of a stock market crash on your wealth, then put your money into investment trusts, or so says the investment trust industry. The Association of Investment Trust Companies (AITC) is arguing that investment trusts recover faster from a stock market crash than any other form of investment, including unit trusts.

Others see these claims as a cynical attempt to narrow the discounts that have dogged this sector. A trust is at a discount when its net asset value is higher than its share price. Today the average investment trust discount is around 12 per cent, having risen steadily since it peaked at 3 per cent in the halcyon days of 1993. Discounts make trusts unpopular with investors. But if they suddenly rushed to buy investment trusts, then these discounts would narrow.

AITC figures show that at the end of December 1990, a lump sum of £100 placed in investment trusts at the end of October 1987 would have yielded more than £130, compared with less than £120 for unit trusts. The reasons for this speedier recovery lie in the rules governing investment trusts and special features such as gearing (borrowing money). In the event of a market correction, the fund managers do not have to sell stock to meet unit redemption as is the case with unit trusts. Investment trusts can also resort to gearing — to put their trusts back on the running track.

However, some experts would argue that history does not always have a habit of repeating itself. Ian Millward of Chase de Vere, the Bath independent financial advisers, said: "There is no reason why they should recover any quicker. They're talking about the past. There is no logical reason for investments to behave in the same way. Top-performing investment trusts usually beat top unit trusts because of gearing."

Mr Millward also said that investors who are worried by stock market volatility should stay away.

"People have been predicting a crash for two years, as soon as the FTSE went over 3,000 points. The market is massively overvalued." People investing in the stock market should be aware that there could be a correction at any time.

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as **Patrick Collinson** says the single currency buzz has prompted 'unbelievably good' mortgage deals

Get in a fix and find the way to a cheaper loan

The sudden buzz that the pound may enter the single European currency earlier than expected has sent money market interest rates tumbling and produced a stampede of cheap three-year to five-year fixed rate mortgages.

Leading mortgage brokers are struggling to find superlatives to describe the recent fixed-rate deals — London & Country said they are "unbelievably good", while John Charcol described them as "a no-brainer". They also give warning that the deals may disappear if sentiment turns against early ERM entry.

The current variable mortgage rate is between 7.9 and 8.45 per cent, largely depending on whether the lender is a mutual or not. But after the fall in money market rates over the last two weeks, mortgage companies are offering loans pegged for five years at only 6.5 per cent. In real terms, that translates into a monthly mortgage payment saving of £116 on a £100,000 loan, taking payments to £655 per month, according to Abbey National.

Ian Darby, a John Charcol director, said: "The recent talk of early EMU entry has had a very marked impact on five-year rates, bringing them down by at least 0.5 per cent. With variable rates at 8.45 per cent, five-year fixes of under 7 per cent look pretty close to a one-way bet. It would need base rates below 5.25 per cent before mortgage rates would match these fixes. To me it's a bit of a no-brainer."

Rex Kirk, Bradford & Bingley lending manager, said: "It is difficult to see the standard mortgage rate going below 7 per cent in the next three to four years. A five-year fix at these sorts of rates is a reasonable gamble."

John Charcol is currently recommending five-year fixed rate offers from Abbey National at 6.49 per cent, but gives warning that the rate is only open to those people able to put down a 25 per cent deposit. For borrowers unable to put down such a deposit, it recommends NatWest's 6.99 five-year fix, which requires a deposit of just 5 per cent.

However, borrowers who go to rival mortgage broker London & Country are more likely to be recommended a three-year fixed mortgage. Bank base rates have risen four times in the last five months, and the Bank of England is expected to push through more small rises to choke off inflationary pressures in the economy. But the City expects rates to peak in mid-1998 and then begin to fall.

Patrick Bunton, London & Country mortgage manager, said that for borrowers to maximise the gains from a fixed mortgage, a three-year peg will allow homeowners to protect themselves from the expected rate rises in 1998, but also take advantage of falling variable rates in 1998-99.

But the key to picking the right short-term fixed-rate mortgage is avoiding punitive early redemption penalties, which can often be levied long after the benefits of the fixed rate have run out. Some three-year fixed-rate loans will still charge a redemption penalty up to four years after the fix has run out.

Mr Bunton recommends a 6.99 per cent three-year fix from National Counties Building Society, although this is available only to borrowers able to put down a 30 per cent deposit. For a deposit of only 5 per cent, Mr Bunton recommends a 7.29 per cent fixed-rate loan from Nationwide.

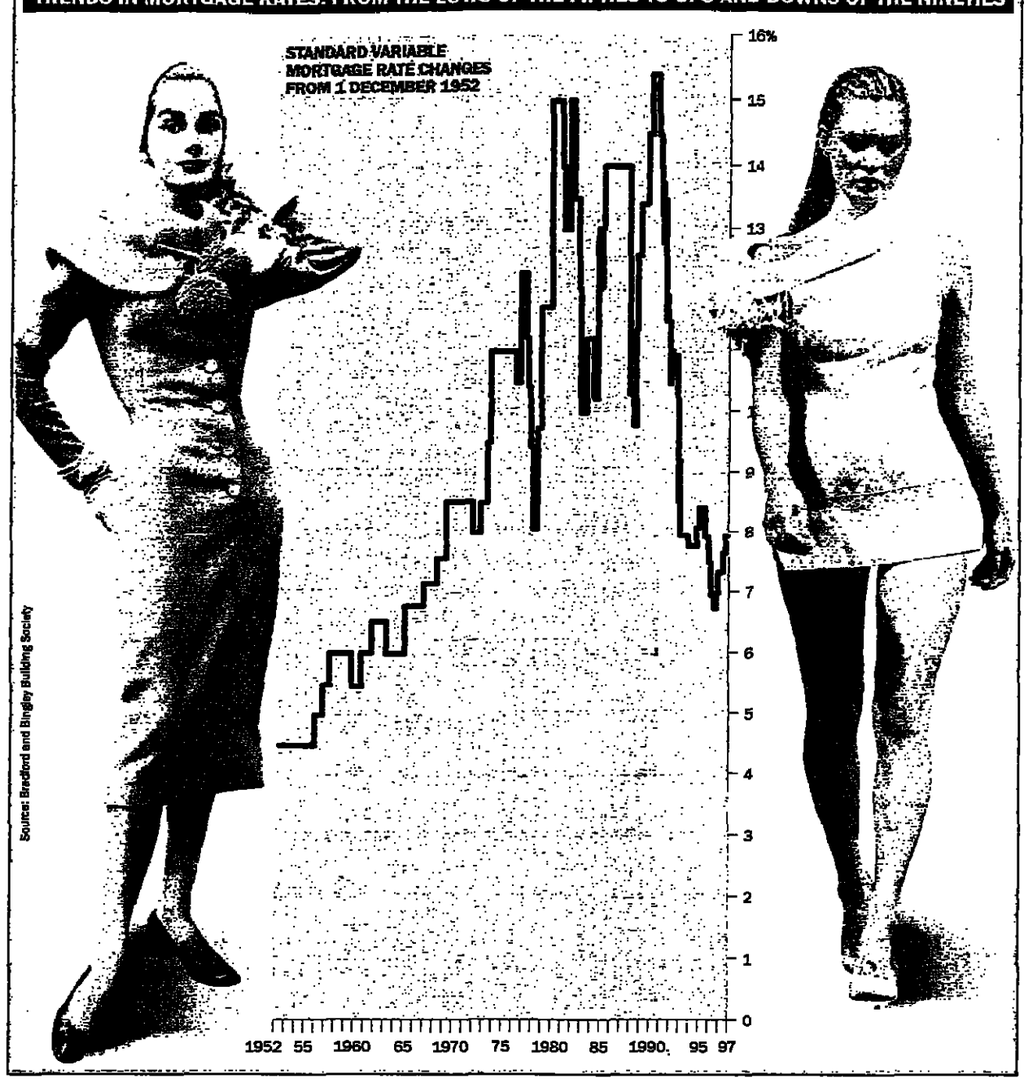
Both the National Counties and Nationwide loan have early redemption penalties, which run for three years. It is also worth noting that National Counties is the society that could potentially pay members more than £5,000 on demutualisation, although it denies it is going to convert.

What if the three-year peg expires and variable rates have still not fallen? Mr Bunton said that as the redemption penalty will also have expired, borrowers could simply fix again at the rate offered or shop around for another lender offering an attractive fixed rate.

Advice on whether to pick a five-year or three-year fix — or whether to fix at all — is easily obtainable from a mortgage broker. The branches of building societies or banks will be more circumspect.

A Nationwide spokesman said: "Even the bravest mortgage lender is not going to try to foresee interest rates six months ahead. We approach mortgage advice by talking about the different options and nudging customers towards what is suitable for them. Currently about half of our customers are taking out fixed-rate mortgages, which is certainly higher than usual."

TRENDS IN MORTGAGE RATES: FROM THE LOWS OF THE FIFTIES TO UPS AND DOWNS OF THE NINETIES



DISCOUNT MORTGAGES

TAKING OUT a fixed-rate mortgage is not the only way for homebuyers to avoid the expected rise in interest rates over the next 12 months. The alternative is to opt for a discount loan.

A discount mortgage cuts the repayments on a loan for a specified period of time, usually for a minimum of six months. Some lenders are currently offering discounts running over two years, reducing the variable rate by up to 2 per cent, from around 8.45 per cent to between 6.5 per cent and 7 per cent.

Ian Darby, director at John Charcol, said: "They are for the cognoscenti for whom the long-term security of fixed, level payments is not so important. They are for people more willing to take a gamble on where interest rates are going."

At the end of the discount period, the mortgage simply reverts to the standard variable rate. For borrowers who believe that interest rates will be heading down in 1999, then a discount loan may be the answer.

But discount mortgages come with the same wealth warnings as fixed-rate mortgages. Amanda Davidson of Holden Meehan, the broker, said: "Discount mortgages lock you in in the same way as fixed loans. You have to check carefully the redemption penalties and other clauses. I prefer the current range of fixed deals over longer periods of time. Short-term fixes and discounts offer less comfort for most people."

REMORTGAGING COSTS

LOCKING IN a mortgage at an attractive fixed rate is not just for people about to buy a new home. Any existing borrower can fix their loan, but first you need to check if the costs outweigh the benefits.

■ Will changing your loan result in an early redemption penalty? If your existing loan is a discount, cashback or fixed mortgage, it is very likely to have redemption penalties which could more than cancel out the benefits of switching to a new fix.

■ Is the mortgage equivalent to more than 75 per cent of the value of your home? If it is, then a mortgage indemnity premium will be required, again making a switch to another loan a costly venture.

■ Legal fees, valuation fees and other disbursements will be incurred in remortgaging. These can add up to around £750 to £800. Fixed-rate mortgages will also carry an arrangement fee, typically around £200.

Therefore, the cost of remortgaging adds up to at least £1,000. However, even with such costs, remortgaging can make sense. Ian Darby, director at John Charcol, the mortgage broker, said: "The first thing you should do is to contact your existing lender and check what deals they have on offer."

Many lenders will allow an existing borrower to switch into one of their fixed-rate products at little cost rather than lose their customer. This is obviously cheaper than incurring legal and valuation fees. But if the lender is unable to offer an attractive fixed rate, switching to another lender can still result in significant savings.

Mr Darby said: "We will make a straightforward comparison. In the vast majority of cases, it is still worthwhile making the move. On a £100,000 mortgage, a 1 per cent difference in the mortgage rate is worth £1,000 a year. So a five-year fix, saving £5,000, easily wipes out the £1,000 remortgaging costs."

PATRICK COLLINSON

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THE TIMES: PERSONAL FINANCE NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

ALAN WELLER

Ignorance rife over cost of retirement

Most people dream of a leisured retirement but few know how they will pay for this happy state. An NOP poll for the Birmingham Midshires Building Society shows that 68 per cent of people have no idea what size their pensions will be, while 20 per cent of those believed that they could survive on the state pension alone.

The self-employed must provide for themselves in old age, without the easy option of a company scheme. The uncertainty of their income makes it hard for them to take on long-term commitments. Ali Taylor, left, is about to embark on pension planning. She has been spurred into action by the experience of a colleague who has found starting a pension at 35 more expensive than he thought.

For a guide to pensions for the self-employed, read Go It Alone (page 55), the latest in our series focusing on people who work for themselves.

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WEEKEND MONEY

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WEEKEND MONEY is edited by Anne Ashworth

Affair could end in tears

Caroline Merrell says emerging markets promise much but investors should approach with caution

The British love affair with emerging markets has always been stormy. Lately investors in Far East funds have suffered the worst pain, as Asian stock markets fell sharply. More falls seem likely this week as the men from the International Monetary Fund drop in on troubled Indonesia.

Far Eastern fans are looking jealously at emerging market addicts who put their trust in Latin America. Here some funds have risen by more than 50 per cent over 12 months. Those who have made money down South America way are now looking to Eastern Europe, as the next region to provide strong returns. Russia, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary are expected to bring rich pickings for investors as they grasp the free market in an ever-closer embrace, like Boris Yeltsin welcoming Tony Blair to the Kremlin this week.

More than £600 million from UK investors has been poured in to emerging market funds over the past four years. There are nearly 50 unit and investment trusts on offer. The arguments in favour of investing in emerging markets are very strong. Growth in Europe and America is slowing, while growth in emerging markets is speeding up as Third World countries become mechanised, large domestic populations become richer, and the developed world switches to manufacturing goods in low-wage markets.

The economic arguments for investing in an emerging fund are qualified. Investors have to take a five-year to ten-year view, only 5 per cent of an entire portfolio should be held in emerging markets, the money should be spread among countries to minimise the risk, and investors should be prepared for a rollercoaster ride.

The Far East was seen as the model for other emerging countries. Unsullied by some of the immense political instability experienced in Latin America, countries such as Malaysia and Thailand were deemed to be examples of the economic miracle. It is this image that has taken a beating as economy after economy in Asia has fallen prey to massive currency devaluations, accompanied by huge falls in stock prices. The exotically named Thai baht, Malaysian ringgit and Indonesian rupiah are now worth a fraction of what they were against the dollar a few months ago. Some funds have seen values fall by as much as 20 per cent in the month.

Foreign & Colonial, one of the oldest and most experienced of the emerging market investment houses, cut back holdings in the East before the crisis. The price of units in its globally invested fund is now 20 per cent higher than six months ago. Edward Goodchild, Foreign & Colonial Asia fund manager, said: "It was a disaster waiting to happen. How long its effects will be felt is another matter." He said the seeds were sown in Thailand, where money to build up the economy was borrowed in dollars, in the belief that the value of the baht was somehow permanently wedded to the value of the dollar, irrespective of the performance of the Thai economy. "The markets had access to overly cheap capital," he said.

As the dollar climbed, it quickly became apparent that the baht had to devalue. The sudden fall revealed that much of the money borrowed had been invested in property, which was not producing high enough returns to service debts. Mr Goodchild added: "To make matters worse the returns from the assets bought by the loans were denominated in the local currency." The ripple effect of problems in Thailand were felt in Malaysia and Indonesia, leading to last week's IMF move.

Although Mr Goodchild admitted that the arrival of the IMF was bound to shake investors' confidence he does believe that the problems are a temporary setback.

Particularly shocking for the free-market capitalists, such as George Soros, were remarks by Dr Mahathir Mohamad, the Malaysian Prime Minister, who was threatening to ban currency trading. This hint of interventionism again hit the economic miracle tag that had been attached to the region.

However, Mr Soros and Mr Goodchild are agreed that the crisis is a temporary setback and the economies will bounce back. Mr Goodchild believes that, for the time being, UK investors would get better returns investing elsewhere.

In contrast, Latin America, the other big emerging region, has shown huge returns over the past 12 months. The continent has now fully recovered from the Mexican peso crisis of 1994. Again a sudden devaluation of the currency caused by a big withdrawal of American investment hit all the markets in the region. Some emerging market unit trusts fell by 25 per cent in value in just one week.

However, over the past year markets have stormed ahead. The hyperinflation and political instability that characterised the region for decades seem to have been put permanently to rest.

Michael Ashbridge, Save & Prosper investment director, said: "The MSCI Latin American index has risen by 46 per cent over the past year; over nine months it is up 56 per cent." The Aberdeen Latin American fund, one of the trusts most hit by the peso's devaluation, has risen by 36 per cent over the year. Other top-performing fund managers over one year in Latin America include Baillie Gifford, Fleming and Old Mutual — all show returns of more than 40 per cent.

Mr Ashbridge said that with inflation of under 5 per cent in many of the Latin American countries and with big investments from the US continuing to flow into the region, growth was set to continue. He said: "Brazil is going to show among the strongest growth, particularly as the Government is continuing with its privatisation programme."

Those who fear the wild fluctuations in the economies of the Far East and South America could consider making an emerging-market investment in a fund rather closer to home. The pictures of Tony Blair meeting Boris Yeltsin, the Russian President, earlier this week reveal how far the spirit of perestroika has permeated since the demolition of the Berlin Wall in 1989.

Fund managers are now looking to the countries of the former Soviet bloc to provide some of the excitement generated by investments further afield. Save & Prosper this week launched its new Europe fund, while ING Barings is also planning a launch.

While share prices in the companies of the Far East are driven by the entrepreneurial spirit characterisd by the region, returns for those investing in Eastern Europe will be earned as the state-run monopolies are privatised and the countries move to a more European economic model.

Mr Ashbridge said: "Eastern Europe is the emerging market on our doorstep. These countries have much healthier characteristics than the markets of South-East Asia and no great correlation to the US market, which improves their risk profile in the event of a sharp fall in US markets."

This last is pertinent after hints this week from Alan Greenspan, Chairman of the US Federal Reserve, that US markets were too high.

Hands across the table: Tony Blair, left, meeting Boris Yeltsin this week in Russia, a market with emerging potential

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THE TIMES

WEEKEND

SATURDAY OCTOBER 11 1997

A memorial garden for Diana

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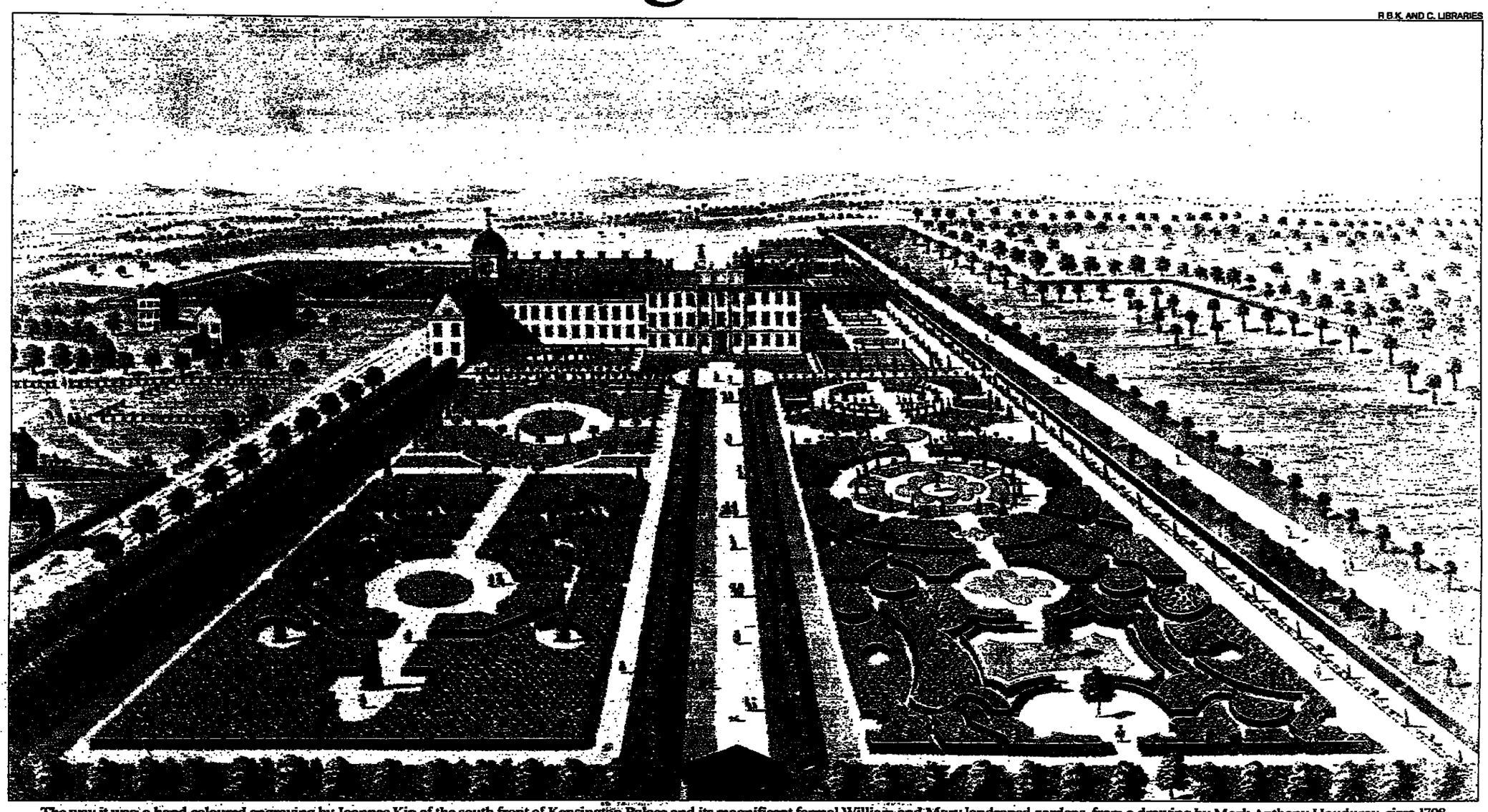

The way it was: a hand-coloured engraving by Joannes Kip of the south front of Kensington Palace and its magnificent formal William and Mary landcaped gardens, from a drawing by Mark Anthony Hauduroy, circa 1708

The best memorial for Diana, Princess of Wales, would be to restore the gardens at her home, Kensington Palace, says Tim Rock

CHORLEY HANDFORD

A bird's-eye view of the south front of Kensington Palace and its gardens as they are today

Henry Kissinger said that you should always wait until ten years after a person's death before giving them a public memorial. Judging by the strength of public feeling, we will not be able to wait so long before commemorating Diana, Princess of Wales. Earl Spencer has already announced that a permanent memorial will be built in the grounds of Althorp, the family home in Northamptonshire, though he has not specified what, exactly, it will be.

The public will, however, demand more. Gordon Brown has been appointed to chair a committee which, with help from the Spencer family, will choose from a stupefying array of suggestions how the Princess should be remembered

Among the more widespread of these are: a Diana airport, a Diana Bank Holiday, a Diana Prom, a Diana pizza, a Diana rugby match, a Diana peace prize, a Diana mall, a Diana stamp, a Diana Aids ribbon, a Diana royal yacht, Diana "affordable accommodation for the homeless" and countless schools, hospitals, roundabouts and even the Diana M25.

The problem with so many of these ideas is that the best memorials come not from committees but from the heart, from mourning poets, painters

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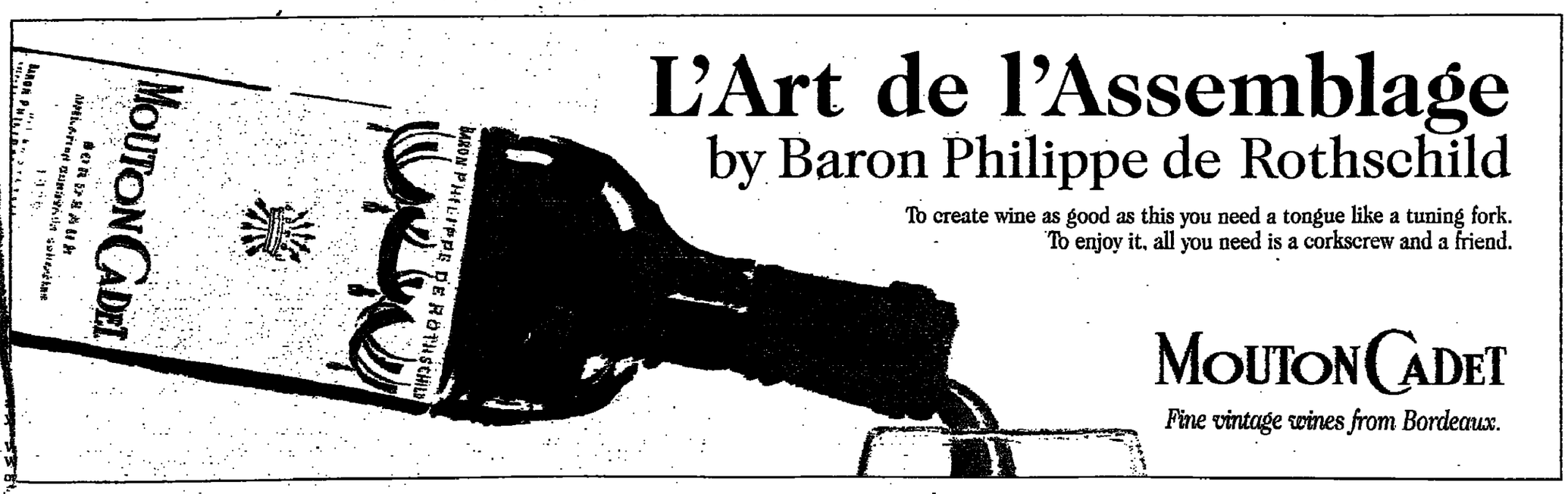

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She's a high achiever — and that includes sex

Why the surprise at top women admitting to affairs outside marriage? It's been going on for centuries, says **Rosalind Miles**

So high-flying women are adulterous, a breathless survey revealed to the world this week. At the annual Women of the Year lunch in London, nearly half the high achievers reported that they had had affairs during their married lives.

What is more, they had no regrets. They even had the nerve to regard themselves as good role models for younger women. Public reaction was swift and harsh: it was as if these women had confessed to cooking their babies and eating them with salt.

Why the surprise? High-flying men have always done the same. The rules for success are still made by men. If successful men commit adultery, that becomes a measure of success for women, too. For power-players like Sir James Goldsmith, it went with the turf. It meant no loss of status, often the reverse. When the scandal of Burton's boss Sir Ralph "five times a night" Halpern broke, stock in the company soared.

The Prince of Wales gained far more clout from his affair with Camilla Parker Bowles than from defending architecture or talking to plants. The election of President Clinton proved that a man thought by many American voters to be as adulterous as hell can still get elected (twice) to the most powerful office in the world. Psychologists call it "prowess behaviour": top people doing what they want to, just because they can. Top women have done it throughout history. The promiscuity of the Empress Messalina, for example, stunned ancient Rome. Catherine the Great's legendary appetites in 18th-century Russia are well known.

Sex is also a weapon that successful women have used to reach the top, although the cleverest do so without having to perform. Women of the Year types take this in their stride. "When anyone accuses me of sleeping my way to the top," said one female director of an advertising agency, "it only means that I'm at the top and they aren't."

Women have always been open to temptation, as every early Christian priest knew. The sin of Eve was lovingly chronicled in sermon, literature and artwork. In Irish legend, Maeve, the warrior queen, accommodated 30 sexual partners a night, while her husband Fergal could only manage seven. Chaucer's voluble Wife of Bath speaks volumes for other randy medieval wives. More recently, Edwina Mountbatten allegedly influenced British foreign policy through her affair with Pandit Nehru. "Edwina and I," confessed her husband, "spent our lives getting in and out of other peoples' beds."

From left: Vanessa Bell, Edwina Mountbatten, Lady Dorothy Macmillan and Marjorie Proops. All enjoyed adulterous affairs

Adultery was also endemic among the female Bloomsberries: Vanessa Bell called her affair with Duncan Grant her "left-handed marriage" and bore his child. The list goes on. Harold Macmillan's wife Dorothy pursued a lifelong affair with the bisexual Bob Boothby, who also fancied the Kray twins, the 1950s East End gangsters. Frieda Lawrence used to ambush men while out on country walks with her husband D.H. After a quick coupling, she would catch up with Lawrence, sublimely indifferent to the grass stains on her gown or the dead leaves in her hair. Marjorie Proops, the *Daily Mirror* agony aunt, was in a marriage that had been a sham from its disastrous first night. She conducted a secret affair for almost 30 years

In its heyday, the imperial adventure opened many doors and women went through them just as fast as men. The film *White Mischief* gives a vivid portrait of the sunburnt world of gin slings and rampant sex. "Are you married, or do you live in Kenya?" was a commonplace quip of the time.

Modern researchers such as Richard Dawkins have managed to identify a male "selfish gene". No matter that Dawkins insists this does not give men permission to sleep around. It is now received wisdom that men have it in their genes to jump out of their jeans as often as they can. Conversely, this half-digested piece of pop science goes, a woman is programmed to find one good man and true to be the best father for her child and provider for herself. This sentimental claptrap takes no account of simple female lust. In reality, monogamy is no more natural a condition for women than it is for men. If it were, it would not have needed to be framed in such a panoply of legal and religious coercion, and backed up by physical violence when they failed.

Well into this century, with the declared intent of upholding a man's power over his wife, English judges refused divorces to women who had been battered and ill-treated by their husbands. Our legal system enshrined a man's right to beat his wife with a stick as thick as his thumb. Only in 1991 did it become illegal for wives to be raped at will.

Women still managed to be adulterous, however, and today's successful women have the opportunity and the means. Women bosses and high earners can stay away from home whenever they like. They use their own money to pay for candle-lit dinners and attractive clothes.

By invading "the man's world", they have learnt to enjoy professional autonomy and economic power. My own quick straw poll of a few high-earning women produced numerous personal reasons for adultery, too. Having an affair conveys confidence, they said, an enhanced sense of well-being and enjoyment of life. It can be a welcome reminder of womanhood after the pressures of a business world where femininity is suppressed as the price of professionalism. If the affair is with a work colleague, the sense of illicit pleasure is increased. A new partner recreates the wonder and delight of sex that a familiar body fails to stir. "It's such a buzz," said a woman lawyer. "When it happens, I'm walking on air."

Put like this, the question is not why do some women have affairs, but why don't more? And to ask the question at all shows how deeply sexist our thinking is. For despite all the modern signals, we still believe that men propagate their seed while women want love, not sex. Perhaps it is time to kiss this myth goodbye.

● *Rosalind Miles is the author of* The Women's History of the World *(HarperCollins, £6.99)*

Women go into battle

Both sexes have the right to defend their nation, says **John Nichol** (below)

It was reported on the front page of *The Times* this week that Mr Blair intends to ask the public if they approve of women in combat roles. It is a little late for that: the first female aircrew joined Royal Air Force combat squadrons a number of years ago to fly its Tornado and Jaguar jets.

And it is not just the RAF: the Army has women undercover with 14 Intelligence Company in Northern Ireland; their task is to conduct covert surveillance against known IRA "players".

Many of the UK's little-known prisoner of war interrogation units are staffed by female officers: friends who have experienced the woman's touch on "Conduct After Capture" courses testify that women are far more efficient interrogators than men.

Of course, it is not just in recent years that we have seen an upsurge in military girl-power. From the days of Queen Boadicea through to Odette Churchill, who served with the Second World War's Special Operations Executive in occupied France, women have made daunting fighters.

Many military women are already in frontline positions

But it is still the male perspective that dominates. As Sarah Ford, from Northern Ireland's undercover unit, says of her male comrades: "I was a huge shock to these lads. They thought they were James Bond and did not want a big soft girly messing up their bravado and antics. But they soon realised I could kick and fight like the next man."

But should they be allowed to fight, and why should we bother to ask the public's opinion now? Could it be that new Labour would prefer to abdicate its decision-making responsibilities so that when things go wrong they can hold up their collective new hands and say, "Sorry, not our decision, Guv"?

American Major Rhonda Cornum, left, was captured in the Gulf War. Flt Lt Jo Salter, above, became the first female Tornado pilot in 1995

Needless to say, the debate will have feminists ranting for equal rights while some crusty old generals will be wheeled out to dribble about the effect on regimental traditions. But what about those who really matter, the women who want to fight and the men who will serve alongside them?

Steve and Sue are RAF fighter pilots who are also partners (names changed to protect the innocent). Steve supports his girlfriend 100 per cent: "Sue's a bloody good pilot and I'd go to war with her any day."

But what if the worst happened? "It could happen at any time to me or to her. That's what the job is about. You accept that or get out."

One of the arguments most used against female troops is the question of a woman's physical strength and mental ability to do the job. Sue is adamant that, as long as selection standards are not changed, females can compete on an equal level with their male counterparts.

I have seen many men who were neither physically nor mentally up to coping with military life; they were allowed to bumble on regardless. But the question of selection and training is much more interesting, and here lies part of the problem. A few years ago, the RAF was forced to allow women to train to be aircrew and, in the ill-judged rush to appear politically correct, training standards were allowed to fall.

A flying instructor from that time was told to ensure that his female students passed the course, regardless of ability; if he was not willing to do this, the hierarchy would find someone who was. This ludicrous position helps neither the military nor the cause of the many female candidates who really can make the grade.

So how will the Government seek approval for this new venture? An internal MoD document is reported to say that using the Central Office of Information's weekly survey will be "the quickest and cheapest method" to test the water, and "less likely to attract public attention". Despite efforts to avoid the issue, there will be one thing guaranteed to attract public attention: our first female prisoner of war.

> 'The Iraqis tried to strip and sexually molest her'

In the military's last three major conflicts, the Falklands, the Gulf and Bosnia, we have always had British PoWs; one can presume that, during the next conflict — and there will be one — things will not be that much different. How would the media and the public react to the spectacle of a British woman being beaten and paraded on television by her foreign captors? Dr John Reid, the Armed Forces Minister, is said to be privately worried about the effect female PoWs might have on morale. And so he should be: but is there a difference between male and female PoWs?

I would say yes. As a PoW in Iraq, I regularly saw other male prisoners being beaten and tortured; the sight and sound was degrading, horrific and something that will never leave me, but I did not try to intervene because it would have been pointless.

However, there was a woman who was captured.

Major Rhonda Cornum was an American Army doctor who had been shot down in a Blackhawk helicopter while on a search-and-rescue mission. Both her arms had been broken in the crash and, despite her incredible pain, the Iraqis tried to strip and sexually molest her on a number of occasions.

At one point, a young American soldier tried to prevent this and was beaten to pulp. She did not ask for help, but he felt duty bound to protect her. Was he wrong? What would the armchair warriors who comment on our nightly news programmes from comfortable studios have said if he had left her to her fate? Would I have reacted differently if it had been my female crewmate being raped? I would like to think I would have had the courage to do something, however fruitless; thank God I did not have to find out. But is it a man's duty to protect?

A frontline officer offered his views regarding women in battle; he was adamant they would be as effective as men. I am sure he is right. I then raised the possibility of one of his female officers being captured and raped or being repatriated pregnant with the enemy's child.

The very notion repulsed him. Regardless of government studies, women are already on the front line; if we are to allow them into combat, then it is about time we aired such thoughts.

I recently spoke to a 19-year-old woman who was learning to fly; her one ambition is to become a fighter pilot. She looked at me in pity when I asked her if she had fears of being captured and tortured. "Exactly the same fears as you had, I imagine," she replied. "Why do you feel the need to worry about me? It's the job I want to do and I'm capable of it. If I get captured it will be my problem, not yours."

This is the crux of the matter: female combatants do not ask for or require special consideration; the problem is male-generated and for males to overcome. The public can be consulted about it until the cows come home, but it is the men, especially those in the military, who will have to confront their fears and prejudices.

A female armed-forces journalist recently argued with me that women are the untapped reserve that the military desperately needs if it is to tackle staffing problems. I think she is right: as we men come to terms with our deep-seated prejudices, women will rightly be allowed to fight for their country, and sooner rather than later. I am confident that women will acquit themselves with honour. When that day comes, however, I hope and pray that my worst nightmares never come true.

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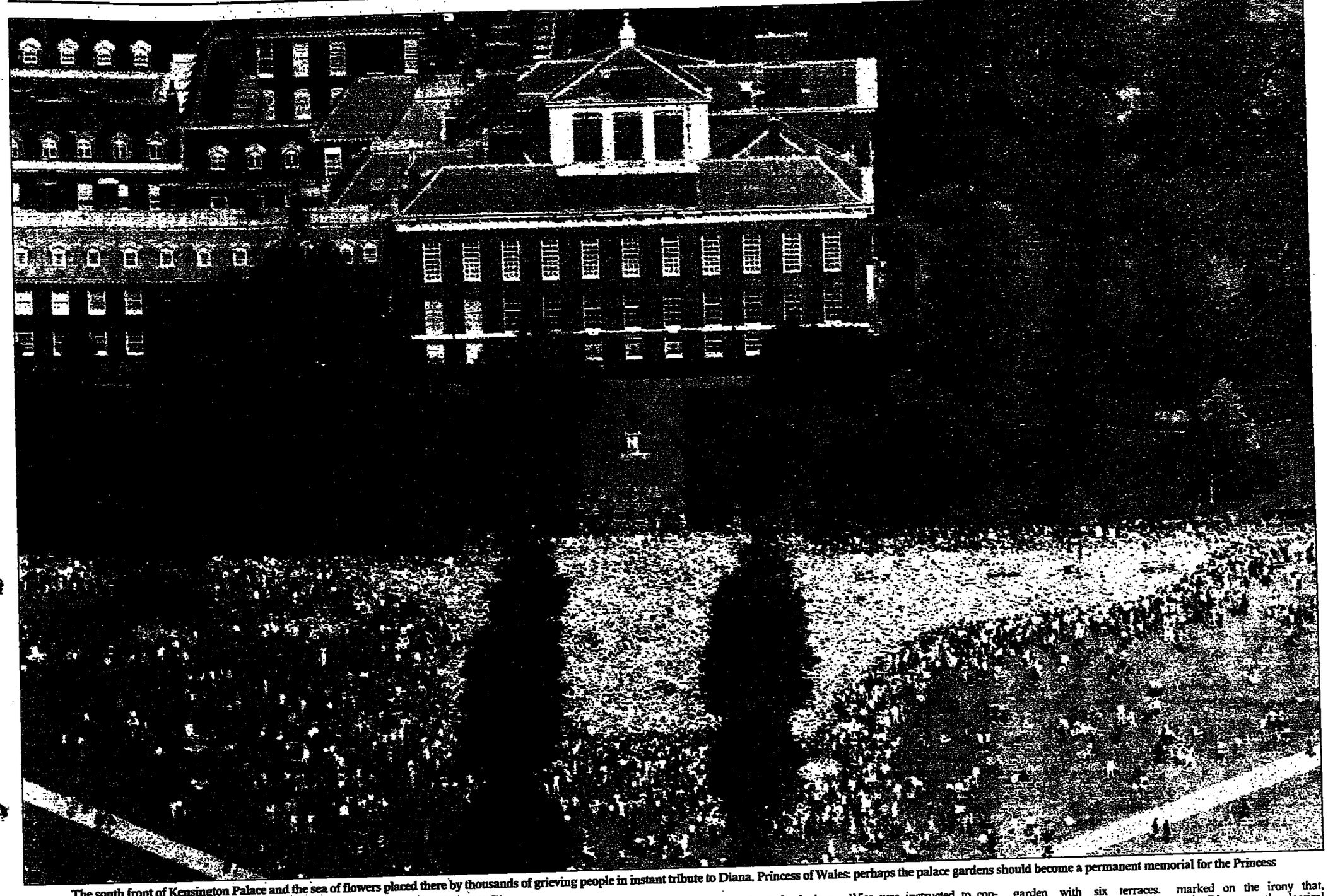


The south front of Kensington Palace and the sea of flowers placed there by thousands of grieving people in instant tribute to Diana. Princess of Wales: perhaps the palace gardens should become a permanent memorial for the Princess

Continued from page 1

and composers, grieving spouses and the occasional eccentric.

No monument erected in memory of a spouse can surpass the Taj Mahal; few could be more touching than the Gothic folly at Clytha, "Erected in the year 1790 by William Jones ... with the purpose of relieving a mind afflicted by the loss of a most excellent wife". Such inspired memorials are not produced by committees.

The last royal spouse to cause such nationwide mourning was Prince Albert. Queen Victoria overruled the people's choice — a design that had won a public competition — to erect something more grandiose, the towering tribute facing the Albert Hall.

A national monument should avoid sentimentality and obscurity — countless forgotten sculptures and statues exist across London (who ever notices Byron in Park Lane or Simon Bolivar in Belgrave Square?). It should attempt to avoid controversy. And there is one proposal, under serious consideration by government and by the heritage establishment, that may fulfil all these ambitions.

Since Kensington Palace was Diana's home, since it became, for weeks after her death, the shrine where she was most mourned, where the people left their tributes in banks of flowers, there is a powerful case for it to become the site of her memorial.

The proposal is to restore William and Mary's formal gardens in front of the palace, together with the "Wilderness" garden to the north, beyond the Orangery. At present, this is a mess; thronged with people sunbathing, snacking, bicycling or walking their dogs. But once it was one of the most stylish gardens in Europe.

Lord Rothschild, the chairman of the National Heritage Memorial Fund, which allocates Lottery money, is said to be excited by the suggestion. Dr Edward Impey, the curator of the Historic Royal Palaces Agency, says it would be "a wonderful idea: there is a long tradition of memorial gardens". Dr Simon Thurley, the director of the Museum of London, says: "It would be a real prize to restore the garden" and that "it would be one of the grandest formal gardens in Europe."

Dr Thurley believes it would also be appropriate. "There was a very tragic death at the heart of all this. Queen Mary died, aged 32, when she and William III were very much in love. Kensington Palace is already a memorial to a youthful royal death."

The palace was used by William because he hated Whitehall, low-lying as it was on the Thames. He bought what was then called Nottingham House and turned it into the palace. The route between the palace and Whitehall was known as the Rue du Roi. This was unpronounceable to locals, who quickly began to refer to it as Rotten Row.

Then, in 1698, Whitehall burnt down, leaving Kensington Palace as the only royal building in London. It was *the* seat of monarchy in the capital and the garden was installed to lend it appropriate grandeur. The landscaping comprised a series of small, formal gardens with box hedges and decorative trees and bushes.

Dr Thurley believes the garden would cost just over £3 million to restore, plus about £60,000 a year to run, if three gardeners were employed.

Some, however, believe such restoration would be inappropriate. John Dixon Hunt, Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Pennsylvania and an expert on Anglo-Dutch gardens of this period, says that, if the memorial is to be a garden, it should be a modern one.

"The Dutch garden that we would recreate could not be the same as the original, because the setting has changed. What's wrong with a modern garden? Let's have a marvellous competition," he says, adding: "Diana, above all, would have appreciated something modern rather than retrospective."

Professor Dixon Hunt argues that Hampton Court is the royal seat we associate with William III, not Kensington Palace. But supporters use the example of Hampton Court to demonstrate the feasibility of the project: a successful precedent for such a restoration is its new Privy Garden.

We have a good idea of what William and Mary's gardens at Kensington Palace looked like from a hand-coloured engraving, circa 1708. Drawn by Mark Anthony Hauduroy, it shows the front of the palace with a symmetrical garden and a path as its central axis. The small, box-hedged gardens each side of the off-centre path are of different widths, shapes and designs.

Hauduroy's drawing was made before Queen Anne uprooted the box — she hated its smell — and shows the decorative stilt-hedges which lined the central path. It also records her two costly but delightful garden buildings: the Orangery of 1705 by Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor, and the Garden Alcove of 1706-07 by Sir Christopher Wren.

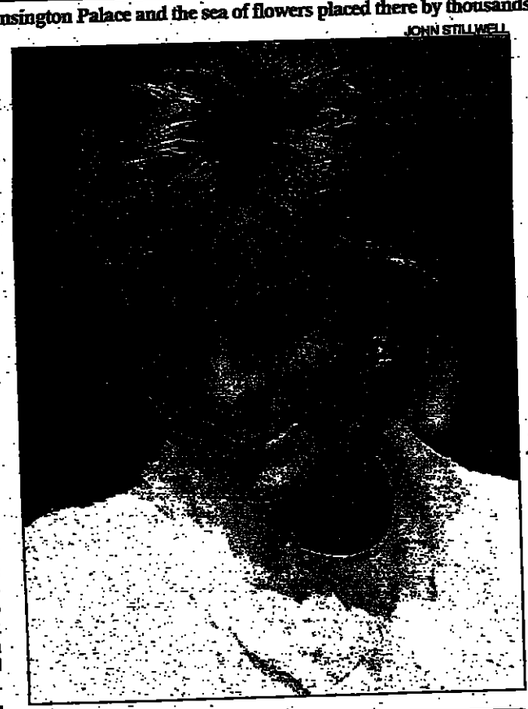
Behind the Orangery, between what is now the Bayswater Road and the palace, lay a 30-acre former orchard (known as the Old Ground). William was determined to create the "Wilderness" garden in its place. Work began by 1701, and by March of 1702 Henry Wise had planted 3,500 shrubs in a "Plantation of Evergreene hedges and flowering Shrubbs in the Quarters", at a cost of just under £400. But by March 8, William was dead, killed in a rding accident.

Queen Anne's succession meant an end to works at Hampton Court and Windsor, but at Kensington Palace, Wise was instructed to continue on "the Old Ground as now made and when finished to be kept in Good Order". Sizeable payments made to him show that he completed the Wilderness, which was divided by broad paths into six areas, the most ingenious of which was the transformation of a gravel pit into a sunken garden with six terraces.

Some people believe that, coupled with the restoration of the formal garden to the south of the palace, the re-creation of the Wilderness would provide the perfect setting for a small stone temple bearing reliefs inside of classical Diana, the Huntress. In his address at the funeral, Lord Spencer remarked on the irony that, while Diana was the classical goddess of hunting, his sister was "the most hunted person in the modern world".

Her death gave rise to a huge tide of public grief. That grief may yet be harnessed in the form of the most stylish memorial garden Britain has ever seen.

JOHN STILLWELL



Wren's haven is ripe for a new dignity

The forlorn Alcove in Kensington Palace gardens

THE GARDEN Alcove by Sir Christopher Wren was the second building Queen Anne added to the formal gardens of William and Mary at Kensington Palace.

The Orangery, by Vanbrugh and Hawksmoor, had been her first. And if that is truly monumental, her garden alcove is heroic in scale at 20ft high and 20ft wide. Its pediment sits on twin cornices supported by elegant, paired Corinthian columns. Between each pair of columns is a niche with a scallop-shell head. Whether they ever bore statues is not recorded.

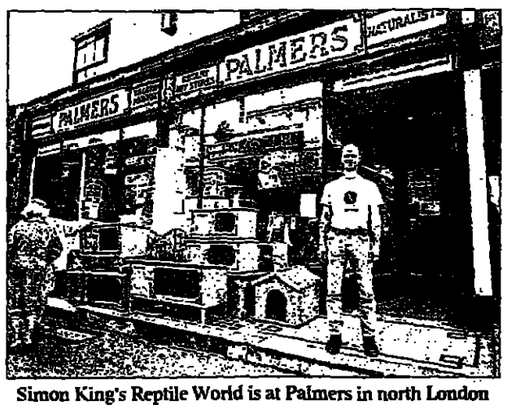
The Alcove comfortably seats 12 people on an oak bench within its semi-circular interior, enhanced by a grandly panelled oak lining. Its cost was immense: by 1706 £400 had been disbursed, and the following year the banker-mason received more than £500 for further work. The Alcove sat at the end of the central poath running down from Kensington Gore. In 1857, it was moved to the northeast side of Kensington Gardens, and now sits forlornly, focused on nothing but Tarmac paths and a group of buildings at the head of the Italian water gardens.

In the 1940s, the Wren Society made an urgent plea for it to be brought back from its present inappropriate position near the head of the Serpentine, and also urged that the South Garden be restored as an object lesson in gardening as practised in the age of Sir Christopher Wren.

One of the benefits if the Alcove were to be moved back to its original site might be that it would exclude some of the noise of the traffic. And if, in addition, the two walls which once ran from it east and west were restored, the garden could again be a peaceful haven. T.R.

Mike Cable discovers why there always seem to be animals roaming the pages of Deborah Moggach's novels

Jiminy, she loves crickets



Simon King's Reptile World is at Palmers in north London

ANDY HALL

Deborah Moggach, wrapped up with an albino Burmese python at her favourite pet shop, and Simon King with a bearded dragon and, on his shoulder, a blue-tongued skink

The sound of singing crickets creates a distinctly Mediterranean feel in the Hampstead home and garden of Deborah Moggach. "It's like being on holiday all the time," says the novelist, who buys the cicada-like insects for £2.50 a tub from a pet shop down the road in Camden, north London.

During winter she keeps the crickets in an aquarium inside the house, but in summer she releases boxfuls of them into the garden, often causing passers-by to do a double take. "You see people suddenly pausing, cocking an ear and looking about them in a puzzled sort of way," she says.

It was her partner for the past three years — a young Hungarian painter whose name she is reluctant to reveal, adding coyly that it is, anyway, impossible to spell — who prompted the idea. She had asked him what he most missed about Hungary and, when he waxed nostalgic about the sound of crickets, she knew immediately how to make him feel at home.

Moggach, aged 49, has been going to Palmers, one of the oldest pet shops in the world, for more than 35 years. As a child, she used to pass it every day on her way to school, often popping in just to gaze at the puppies and kittens, but also drawn more to the exotic creepy-crawlies in the reptile section upstairs, now run independently by Simon King, a former rocker, as King's Reptile World.

"In those days the owners didn't mind how long you hung around the shop; it was like going to the zoo but free," she recalls.

It was here that the young Deborah first bought live crickets — as food for the salamanders that were among her many early pets. "They were always escaping, and I remembered how you would hear them singing all round the house," she says.

Moggach has always been "crazy" about animals. "My mother used to illustrate horsey books and I was mad about horses," she says. "I used to have an imaginary animal life which involved galloping around London, neighing, tossing my head and tying myself up to railings."

At the same time she had an endless succession of pets, starting with a pair of Californian Green Lizards. "I had all the usual things, such as rabbits, guinea pigs and hamsters, but reptiles and amphibians were what I liked best, especially newts and lizards," she says.

my favourite shop

It was an interest she never grew out of. At Bristol University she kept two rabbits that roamed free in her room. And a close friend vividly recalls the "assorted livestock", including three great crested newts, that had the run of the Moggach household after she married.

In her novels — the two most recent of which, *Seesaw* and *Close Relations*, are being developed for television — pets feature freqently and symbolically.

"Gerbils and hamsters, for instance, are a sign of the continuity of life," she says. "The characters in my books are always divorcing and rowing, with terrible things happening to them, but in the background there is this scraping noise as the hamster goes round and round on its wheel, unperturbed by all the drama.

"And I always have horrible rabbits in my books. There is a particularly horrible one in *Close Relations*, a moth-eaten old buck that growls and stamps its feet and bites everybody, a family pet that has outlived its welcome to become a focus for any family aggro."

After her marriage, by which she had two children, ended in divorce, Moggach lived with Mel Calman, *The Times* cartoonist, for ten years until his death from a heart attack in 1994.

Calman was not an animal person, she says, "but he didn't make a fuss until one of the kids let a gerbil escape and it ended up in his hair while he was asleep. He leapt up like a Victorian maiden, screaming and cowering in a corner. It was all a bit traumatic and after that we had to be a bit more careful about keeping things shut in".

The only creatures, other than the crickets, she keeps are two cats. But she could be tempted to something a little more exotic — she was very taken with one of the pale yellow and white albino pythons that Mr King breeds, although slightly put off by the prospect of it growing to a full length of 18ft. She was even tempted by a blue-tongued skink.

What she would really like, she says, is an armadillo. Or even an anteater. "They're so wonderfully prehistoric," she says.

In the meantime, she would recommend singing crickets to anyone. "They're cheap and easy, and make jolly good presents: they're unusual and they bring great pleasure."

● *King's Reptile World, Upstairs at Palmers, 35-37 Parkway, London NW1 (0171-284 0730). Open Mon-Sat, 9.30am-6pm.*

BARGAINS

There are bargains to be had at markets, boot sales, junk shops and stalls all over the country. Let loose on them with £100, what would you buy?

SET in a Norfolk village amid the flat acres of agribusiness reclaimed from the Wash, and stacked with every imaginable item, the wartime aircraft hangar in Terrington has had a chequered career.

Dismantled after its military service and shifted 17 miles, it has been a carrot-washing plant, lorry depot, engineering works and is now the Terrington Furniture Warehouse, run by Mick and Joy Johnson.

More than 7,500sq ft encompasses the stock of a score of different dealers. You will find an example of every age and style of furniture that has emanated over the past 150 years.

Hoping to brighten a student bedroom, I bought:

● A Victorian scrap screen pasted with fading book illustrations, £22. Two pairs of glazed cotton curtains, labelled Osborne and Little, £55 — grubby but lined, interlined and including a pelmet, tie-backs and enough fabric to spare to cover a chipboard bedside table, £6. Pink and gold lustre-ware saucer, £1.50. Velvety leaved burgundy begonia, 70p. White wool rug, £10. Two vintage LPs — the *Dream of Gerontius* with Malcolm Sargent and Julie Birchell's *Ambition* — £2 each. Organic apples, 30p. Total: £100

Screen and two pairs of curtains for just £77

SALLY SMITH

● *Terrington Furniture Warehouse, Sutton Road, Terrington St Clements, King's Lynn, Norfolk (01553 829748). Open daily, 10am-5pm.*

GADGETS OF THE WEEK

The Aspivenin sting-remover

WHILE on holiday, I was desperate to get bitten by fleas or mites or even mosquitoes so that I could put a product called Aspivenin to the test. The pests must have known, however, because for the first time in living memory I didn't feel a single tell-tale stabbing pain. But some airborne thing did take a fancy to my travelling partner, which gave us the chance to try out this sting-remover on her arm. It worked perfectly.

The Aspivenin is a chunky plastic syringe in a delicate shade of lime green with four different extractor cups that fit where the needle usually goes. If stung, you place a cup over the itching spot, push in the plunger and a vacuum is created strong enough to suck out the poison — along with any desire to scratch. Although the vacuum on the surface of the skin is strong, it will not damage the skin tissue and can be used safely on children. The cups should be rinsed out after use.

The kit comes in a waterproof case and should work on bites, stings from wasps, bees, mosquitoes, horse flies, ants, spiders, scorpions, snakes, jellyfish and, perish the thought, venomous fish.

THE INSECT REPELLENT qualities of Ban the Bug wristbands are not a patch on their ability to repel humans. The bands give off a pungent pong and, to extend their life, come in a re-sealable bag — which, for much of our holiday, is where they remained.

The sickening smell — like sweet paraffin — seems to keep away bugs, but at a price: by making you and your clothes stink in the process. Having shaken off the bugs, it's not so easy to shake off the pen and ink.

TIM WAPSHOTT

● *Aspivenin, £12.95 plus p&p, and Ban The Bug, £9.95 for three plus p&p, both from Innovations (0990 807060).*

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*Sun + Mirror, 1996

RADIOS

Tune in to the right bands

ACCORDING to the BBC, the earliest that Digital Audio Broadcasting technology (DAB) will be upon us is next year, and for those who still wallow in the nostalgia of radio's golden age, its arrival can wait at least until the 21st century.

While high-tech radios' crystal-clear quality is undoubtedly a fine thing, the fuzzy reception of an old Bakelite wireless perfectly evokes the warmth and innocence of a different era.

Since the earliest crystal radios, manufacturers have adapted sets' shapes and functions to suit the fashions and politics of every era. In 1933, for example, the "People's Radio", with a Third Reich symbol on the dial, was released: it received perfectly in Germany but, for propaganda reasons, could not pick up transmissions from abroad.

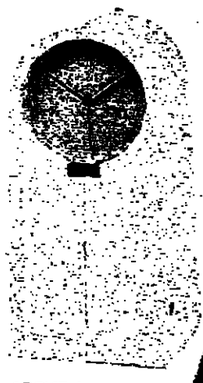
In the Thirties, many manufacturers cashed in on the vogue for Art Deco, decorating their wooden cases with beautifully carved patterns and cut-outs; in the practical Fifties, models were functional, with simple plastic dials and clean-cut speakers.

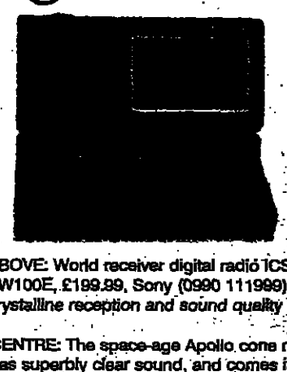
Today, there are radios that are a few millimetres wide, that are waterproof, shatter-proof, can be worn on the ear, on a belt or in the shower.

Thanks to new technology which lets manufacturers make radios ever smaller and more powerful, as well as adaptable to multiple power sources, it is possible to tune in to programmes wherever you are. All you have to do is pick your size, your shape, your style and colour, and enjoy surfing the waves.

LISA GRAINGER

LEFT: Mini FM Radio (no bigger than a 50p coin) looks sporty and comes with twin earphones but the sound is so-so; £12.99 (p&p £3.50) from Presents For Men (01295 750100)

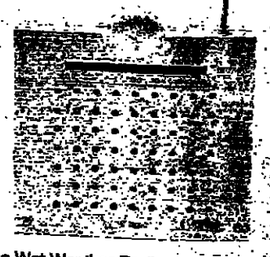

ABOVE: Ivory designer Coo Coo clock-radio by Philippe Stark for Alessi is for those who put style before sound quality; £65, Heals, (0171-636 1666)


ABOVE: World receiver digital radio ICS SW100E, £199.99, Sony (0990 111999), offers crystalline reception and sound quality

ABOVE: "Tuner-Fish" radio with suction pads or built-in hook to attach to tiles or shower hook, £19.99, Baby Basics (01793 697300)

CENTRE: The space-age Apollo cone radio has superbly clear sound, and comes in translucent green, £27.50 from Brats (0171-351 7674) or matt aluminium, £21.99, from the Science Museum (01379 649637; catalogue, £3.50; UK, £7.50 overseas, including p&p)

ABOVE: The Freeplay BayGen radio, £59.99, from Natural Collection (01225 442288) needs no batteries; just wind it up and enjoy the clear sound. Heavy, but ideal for the environmentally-aware home listener


ABOVE: The Wet Weather Radio (ref. 30452) is an entertaining bathroom companion. £11.95, from the Maritime Company (01993 770450)

RIGHT: Retro-style Roberts Revival 550, in blue, claret or green leather-cloth finish; large high-quality speakers provide excellent sound, £129, Harrods (0171-730 1234); for stockists call 01709 571722

RESEARCH BY PORTIA COLLWELL AND JENNIFER RUGGEBERG

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هكذا من الإصل

Glitz takes centre stage

Whether it's a night out at the opera, or a theatre gala, it's curtains up on opulence, **Heath Brown** writes

When I was first asked what to wear to the opera, I thought about my student days in the late Eighties when we used to queue for last-minute tickets at the opera houses dressed in Army fatigues and T-shirts. No one then, it seemed, thought of dressing up for the event: apart from the odd gala, audiences seemed distinctly unglamorous. Thankfully, today the tide is changing, and dressing down is decidedly on the way out whether it is in nightclubs or opera houses.

For the guys, dressing up has always been easy: dinner jackets are a failsafe method of looking smart, as are a good suit and tie or velvet jacket. But for women, the task requires a lot more time and effort to get that special look.

The key is not to go overboard, but to go for simple but glamorous sophistication. Sleek, ankle-length skirts and dresses are ideal, because they will be comfortable sitting in the stalls or easing your way to the crush bar. For the more daring, a shoestring-strap crepe dress with a high split will be cool and comfortable, as will a silk or satin slip dress.

If you prefer separates, there is plenty of scope for mixing sumptuous velvets, slinky satins and multicoloured silks. A bias-cut skirt teamed with an iridescent top will always be useful, providing colour and comfort; alternatively, select soft, flowing wide-legged trousers in shimmering metallic material. Fabrics that rustle should be avoided — not only will they irritate fellow opera-goers, but they can also crease and scratch.

There is plenty of opportunity to dress up even the most simple garments with extravagant accessories. The perfect stole should be warm and should cover your shoulders without detracting from the rest of the outfit when you arrive at the opera house.

Accessories should reflect the glamour of the occasion: the opulence of the theatre foyer, with its glittering chandeliers and gilt mirrors, is the perfect place to show off those little shiny satin shoes, the outrageously decadent little beaded handbag holding your essential opera glasses, or those diamanté earrings, necklaces and tiaras that look plain daft anywhere else.

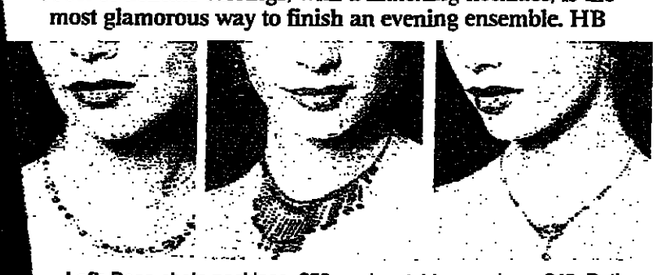
You don't go to the opera every day, so its worth making an effort. And if you look the part, it'll not just be the divas whose praises are being sung.

ABOVE: black velvet wrap top, £80, long, silk, printed skirt, £125, and scarf, £50, Fenn Wright & Manson, selected stores nationwide (0171-323 4821). Brocade shoes, £89.99, from a selection at Hobbs (0171-586 5550)

TOP LEFT: Long red split crepe and satin dress, £160, Karen Millen (01622 664032). Black embroidered shawl, £250, Browns (0171-491 7833). Black suede mules, £110, Russell & Bromley, as before. **TOP RIGHT:** Long gold lace dress, £310, and underslip, £225, Paddy Campbell (0171-493 5646). Brown velvet patterned stole £165, Roh Ka, Browns, as before. Animal-print sandals, £225, Ernesto Esposito, Russell & Bromley, as before. Choker, £79, Erickson Beamon at Fenwicks (0171-629 9161)

THREE OF A KIND

A set of delicate earrings, with a matching necklace, is the most glamorous way to finish an evening ensemble. HB



Left: Rose-chain necklace, £58, and matching earrings, £48, Butler and Wilson (0171-409 2955). **Centre:** Chain gun-metal drop-stone choker, £125, and matching earrings, £59, Erickson Beamon at Fenwicks (0171-629 9161) **Right:** Silver-link glass-beaded necklace, £4.99, and matching earrings, £3.99, Accessorize (0171-313 3031)

ABOVE: Long cream and gold Lurex and silk brocade slip dress, £820, Mariam El-Accad, 15 Victoria Grove, London W8 (0171-838 1128). Full-length fur-trimmed velvet coat, £895, Mulberry, 41-42 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-491 3900) and 62 Kings Street, Manchester (0161-839 3333). Black suede mules, Russell & Bromley, 24-25 New Bond Street, W1 (0171-629 6903)

Photographs: RICHARD BURNS
Hair and make-up: MICHELLE MARSH for Hard Candy.
Styling: AMANDIP UPPAL

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هكذا من الإصل

Jane Owen finds the founder editor of the anarchic comic relaxing in his greenhouse with a flask of coffee

Viz man tries some fernery business

ME AND MY GARDEN GRAHAM DURY

When the children are asleep and the household chores are done, Graham Dury, *founder editor* of the extremely rude and successful adult comic *Viz*, slips out to the greenhouse he has restored. Inside, he sits on a folding chair *with a flask of coffee listening* to Radio 4 and watching his tree ferns grow. At a rate of about an inch a year.

"It's sad, really. I have turned into a 35-year-old old *fart*. My wife is very indulgent. She is understanding even when I buy tree ferns. The last one cost £400 but, as she says, I don't drink or smoke, so . . .

"Unlike some things, size does matter with tree ferns. They don't have a trunk until they are about ten years old and so a young tree fern looks like an ordinary fern." Dury buys all his ferns from Martin Rickard.

Ferneries were all the rage in Victorian times and, although Dury's respectable Edwardian *house* in Whitley Bay, Newcastle, is a few years out, it sits well with a restored greenhouse full of tree ferns and a walled garden with two eight-foot Dicksonia antarctica — which reach almost double that when their fronds are out — and two dead ones.

"They died of neglect. They can't take severe cold, although they will usually *survive outside, even in this area. They* also need to be watered regularly. I've kept them as a reminder not to neglect the remaining plants."

Dury's tree-fern passion began when he was studying A-level botany. He is colour blind and so form and structure give pleasure where colour cannot. The passion has survived a fling with carnivorous plants and saprophytic plants.

All that now remains of the carnivores is a Venus fly-trap, but Dury has managed to infect his apple tree with mistletoe — the trick is to rub the seeds into the host bark when they are ripe, in March. And Dury has *successfully infected the rampant* ivy in his garden with Broom Rape parasite, *Orobanche hederae*. The creamy, orchid-like flowers and their brown darts that push out of the soil "stink of armpits, feet, haven't-had-a-wash" says Mr Dury. "The smell attracts flies that pollinate the plant."

Mr Dury, who studied genetic engineering at Leicester University, became a regular cartoonist for *Viz* in 1982. Today he is one of a team of five who "do everything", from writing *stories* and drawing cartoons to putting the magazine together.

Dury used to keep his carnivorous plants at his *mother's house* in Nottingham. When he and his wife, Angela, bought their house in Newcastle he indulged his tree *fern passion with the hardiest*, and most delicate looking, *Dicksonia antarctica*. Now he has his eye on the unusual tree fern *Cyathea medullaris*, which has pitch-black stems.

In the greenhouse, where a paraffin heater staves off extremes of cold, there is a 6ft *Dicksonia squarrosa, one of* the tallest in Dury's collection. All plants here are grown in large flower pots, including five Cyatheas: *australis, cooperi, fibrosa*, and *dealbata*, or the silver fern. *C. dealbata* has to be taken into the house for winter, where it lives in the attic. Like most tree ferns, which are forest floor plants, too much light will kill them.

In the winter months the *Dicksonia antarctica* needs a little straw around its front — nothing more, because the rest of the "tree" is dead. It is possible to cut antarctica at the base of its trunk and the fern part will continue growing, provided it is regularly sprayed to imitate the humid conditions of the Southern Hemisphere.

Dury's next project is the restoration of a second greenhouse to house bigger specimens. It will have to wait a year or so. He and Angela expect their third child in March, to join Jack, three, and 18-month-old George. "I'll do the greenhouse when the new baby is walking," he says.

● *British Pteridological Society, c/o Depts of Botany, Natural History Museum, Cromwell Road, London SW7 5BD.*

● *Rickard Nursery, Kyre Park, Tenbury Wells, Worcs WR15 8RP (01885 410282).*

PETER PRYER

Viz mainstay Graham Dury potters about among his plants. "I have turned into a 35-year-old fart," he confesses

- **PROTECT** late cauliflowers from frost by bending the leaves down over the curds.
- Lift main crop potatoes and remove all damaged or rotten tubers before storing.
- *Lift a few roots of mint and plant* shallowly in an 8in pot of gritty compost under glass for winter/early spring picking.
- Rotate pot plants on window sills, so that they do not become one-sided as light levels drop in the winter months.
- Clean down and disinfect greenhouses.
- Pick late apples. Spray peaches troubled with peach leaf curl with copper fungicide.

GARDEN ANSWERS

STEPHEN ANDERTON
replies to readers' letters

Q My flowering cherry is 20ft high and has a huge root coming from the trunk. The root is is 1ft across, 5ft long, exposed on the surface of the soil. It is also unsightly and makes mowing difficult. Can I remove it without damaging the tree? — A.G. Lilley, Colyton, Devon.

A Any cherry root a foot across means that the tree must be 50 to 60 years old. Because this root connects to the base of the trunk, it is obviously one of the half-dozen main roots, and if you sever it you will seriously shock the tree. The cut will also make a huge wound at ground level, where infections can set in. It would be the beginning of the end for the tree, so live with it. What you *can* do is to strip the turf off around the root and build up two to three inches of soil beside it (but not against the trunk), so you can refurf smoothly over the root and make mowing easier. This problem stems from poor planting in the first place: there must have been a main horizontal root high in the rootball at planting time, which was not encouraged to point to the base of the planting hole but left to wander close to the surface. The roots of cherry trees are inclined to throw suckers anyway when damaged, so they should always be encouraged to grow downwards and deeply at planting time.

Q I have a beautiful white brugmansia which is being eaten by an invisible enemy. All the growing points are attacked, and the leaves are a mass of holes. There are no signs of caterpillars, and, anyway, I thought the plant was poisonous. Someone has suggested earwigs. — Mrs Imogen Thomas, Uplyme, Dorset.

A Earwigs will be correct. They feed at night, so a torchlit trip into the undergrowth may provide the answer. Mechanical controls include setting traps (upside-down pots stuffed with dry grass stuck on a garden cane), from which they can be led and slaughtered during the day. If you need to spray, use permethrin or pirimphos-methyl, applied late on a warm evening. Earwigs will even eat clematis, which are potentially lethal. I planted a *Clematis montana* this spring and they ate every new shoot it tried to make for weeks on end. At the moment the earwigs are all asleep in my sunflower heads; thousands of them, I am sure.

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Plants that make a grand exit

Even in decline, some species keep their looks, says Barbara Abbs

Most of us try to have our gardens looking good all year, particularly if they are small. Unfortunately, unless a garden is geared to one magnificent seasonal display — rhododendrons, roses or summer bedding plants, for example — plants insist on following their own unsynchronised life cycles. From snowdrops onwards, even as one plant comes into flower, another is dying.

In winter, this does not matter. People home in on *Iris unguicularis*, witch hazel or winter jasmine. Anything colourful is a bonus and a skeletal neighbour or a carpet of russet leaves merely emphasises its beauty. In summer, expectations are different. We want the garden to be a seamless scene of flower and leaf, not a series of plants in full glory surrounded by the browning foliage or skeletons of others that died last month.

There are several notorious offenders which do not go grace fully. There are those that collapse suddenly and unseasonably early like *Crambe maritima* and mesembryanthemums or Livingstone daisies (now *Dorotheanthus bellidiformis*) leaving large gaps, those that produce autumnal berries in July, like *Sorbus mougeottii*, and buddleias whose flower spikes are dying at the bottom before the tip is fully out.

Worst of all, certainly in my garden, is the Scotch thistle or *Onopordon acanthium*. At its best, this is a wonderfully dramatic thistle, 8ft high, with huge grey leaves and purple flower heads. At its worst, which seems to come quickly in its second year, it is a gaunt eyesore, with all its lower leaves resembling limp, dirty chamois leathers, its heads brown and the leaves shredded by snails.

Many trees and shrubs are as beautiful in autumn and winter as in summer: silver birches, the corkscrew hazel *Corylus contorta*, the dogwoods or cornus cultivars and *Acer griseum*, the maple with bark like polished mahogany. There are the plants which have a wonderful flush of creativity as they die down along with the year, transformed with fruit, berries, seed heads and autumn colour. The huge leaves of *Vitis coignetiae* turn brown and apricot. Pernettyas have mauve, pink and white berries. Many clematis produce elegant green seedheads as soon as the flowers are over.

Not all plants are so obliging, however, and it is easy to be seduced by close-ups of flowers in catalogues and end up with a border full of ugly plants whose flowers are as fleeting as will-o'-the-wisps and which begin a slow, lingering death in middle age.

Luckily there are many plants of which this is not true. A few days after the flowers have died, you forget that you had them; yet their leaves remain a rich background to later-flowering plants. Geraniums and aquilegias can be sheared back as soon as they have flowered and they will grow a new mound of leaves. Rock roses or helianthemum varieties demand a close cut: they make tidy cushions of their greenish grey leaves and remain compact for the following year. The flowering stems of *Alchemilla mollis* need individual treatment, cutting each back to the base. The soft, scalloped leaves soon expand to fill any gaps. *Lychnis coronaria* in vivid magenta or white or the *L. oculata* group, white with a pink eye, has attractive flower stems at all angles. When the flowers are over, the stem can be cut right back and tufts of grey leaves remain all year.

A plant which looks good all year is *Sedum spectabile*, the ice plant. It has cool green leaves and buds, filling spaces between other plants until September. These turn gradually to a good deep pink and attract butterflies, and then, at the appropriate time, change to a rich rust and can stand all winter. Every garden should have a clump.

Crocosmia 'Lucifer' does the decent thing as do most of the other crocosmias, dropping individual flowers while they are still a brilliant scarlet or shade of orange or yellow, on to the plants underneath and leaving behind an arching wand of beadlike seed capsules. Most salvias go gracefully, leaving behind delicately coloured bracts. *S.* 'East Friesland' and *S. sclarea* var. *turkestanica* are almost as good without flowers as with them. *Knautia macedonica* — a wine-red scabious — loses the tiny flowers from its pin-cushion head, leaving a neat green round behind.

Pictures of the satiny purple-striped mallow flowers of *Malva sylvestris mauritiana* make it seem irresistible. Unless carefully placed, however, the plant's coarse leaves, like the related hollyhock, are inclined to get rust, and are very attractive to snails. A better bet if you long for mallow flowers is *Lavatera* 'Barnsley' which, in spite of problems of reversion and over-popularity, still looks fresh and new to the last.

There are several families, camellias, hebes and roses, for example, where cultivars have different habits. Some roses persist in hanging on to their petals long after they have been transformed into beige rags. Dead-heading needs to be done daily and few of us have the time for it these days. Although Vita Sackville-West made it seem romantic, it is much scratchier and less pleasant, particularly when done at dusk. Not all roses need dead-heading. Single roses and species nearly always drop their petals and then develop hips.

Camellias, too, are variable. Many hang on to their dead flowers, disfiguring the whole bush, while others, like *C.* x *williamsii* 'Debbie', drop the complete flower so that it falls to the ground like a brilliant pink ruffled skirt. The exquisite pink-tipped white petals of the formal semi-double *C. Japonica* 'Desire' fall off gracefully too. The camellia crosses bred by J.C.Williams at Caerhays, like 'Donation' and 'Citation', drop their petals and the shrubs always look soigné.

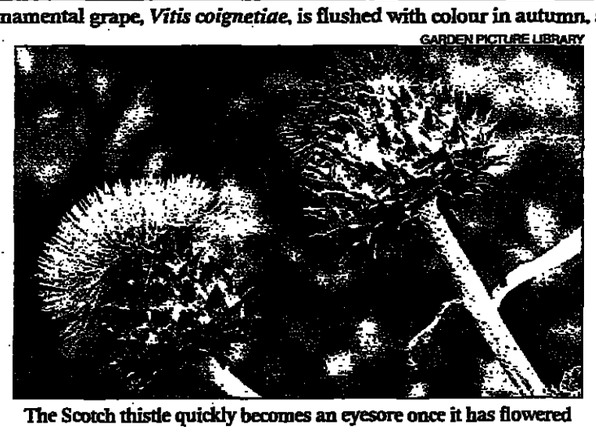
The earlier many hebes flower, the sooner they become a mass of crispy brown flower spikes which are reluctant to fall from the plant. On *H. recurva* and *H. pinguifolia* 'Pagei', which both have white flowers and grey leaves, these show up depressingly. Darker-leaved types, with purple flowers, like the long-flowering *H.* 'Mrs Winder', are much less noticeable in decay.

All plants, even majestic oaks, die eventually, but not all manage their annual decline and fall with equal grace. Luckily, many popular and widely available plants do.

CLIVE NICHOLS

Seasonal goodwill: the ornamental grape, *Vitis coignetiae*, is flushed with colour in autumn, although it is dying down

GARDEN PICTURE LIBRARY



The Scotch thistle quickly becomes an eyesore once it has flowered

GARDENER'S UPDATE

JANE OWEN

BARGAIN OF MONTH

THERE is still time to treat fences and trellis before winter strikes.

The first 100 readers to write to Cuprinol Sprayer Offer, Freepost (BA1058), Frome Somerset, BA11 1YA will get a free pressure sprayer worth £27.99 and a £1 voucher for any Cuprinol product.

PLANT OF THE MONTH

THE large leaves of the unusual tender evergreen shrub *Clerodendrum fragrans syn. C philippinum* shows off clusters of almost rose-like, scented pinky-white flowers. Look out for the few blooms that may still be left. For a catalogue, send three first-class postage stamps to Brian Hiley, 25 Little Woodcote, Wallington, Surrey SM5 4UV.

FLOWER POWER

THE London Children's Flower Society is offering daffodils to inner-city school pupils, for a small charge, which will be judged when they have flowered. Contact the society at 26 Chiselhurst Road, Orpington BR6 ODG (01689 821288).

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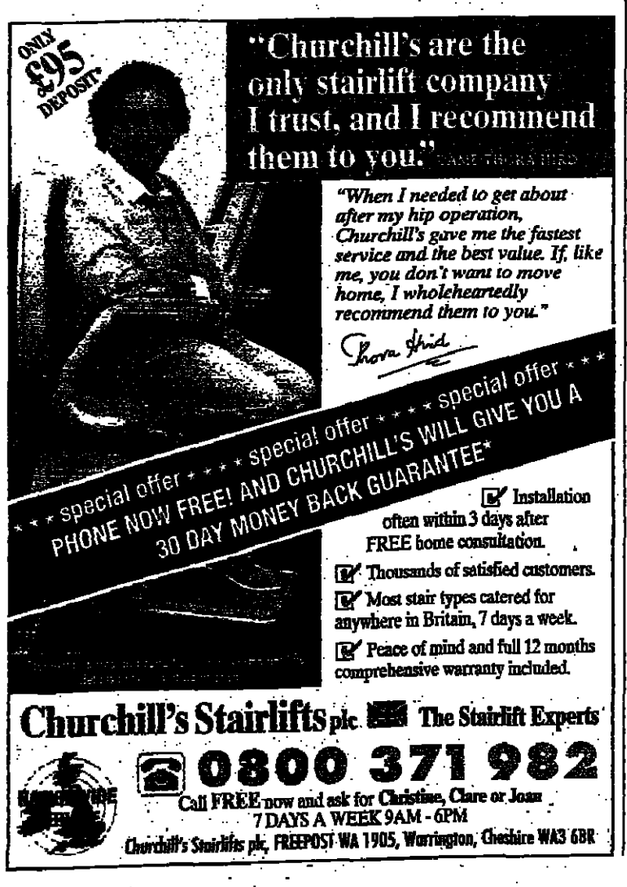

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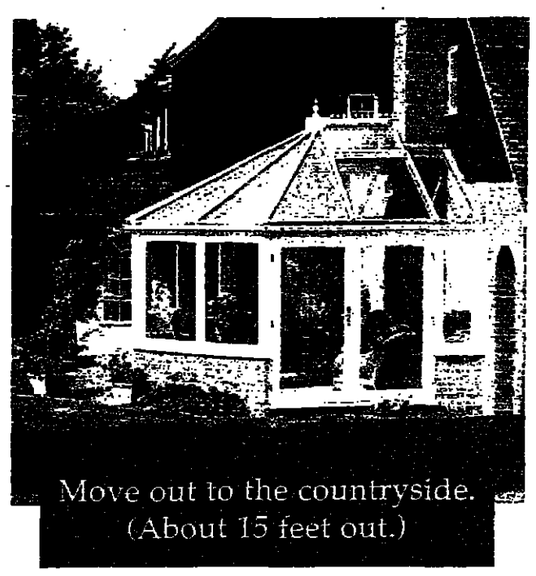
HOMES & GARDENS



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Moving brick by brick: **Tom Rowland** on a half-timbered house in the way of the Channel Tunnel link

House seeks a new home

The public inquiry into building a new station at Stratford in east London for the Channel Tunnel rail link started this week, and re-opened the messy saga of the high-speed link right in the middle of the Tory Party conference.

The rail link has to be among the worst examples of bad public administration to be seen in Britain since the end of the Second World War. But until the track is finally opened in 2003, the latest date, nothing is finally settled.

In 1993 it was announced that just 11 houses would have to be demolished to make way for the third revision of the route from Folkstone to London. That went up to about 60 demolitions when the route was further revised to go through Ashford in Kent.

Among them there is one rather special building. Talbot House is a 15th-century Kentish hall house with the sweetest catslide roof and a charmingly uneven pattern of windows on the front façade. It stands in the village of Sellindge between Folkestone and Ashford.

In 1993 British Rail announced that it intended to rebuild the house on a site nearby. Then Union Railways took over the high-speed link project. Now, four years on, it is certain the house will be rebuilt but the question is exactly where. The removal and rebuilding costs have been estimated at £200,000, but on the credit side, the house will be worth a great deal more than that — especially if it is moved to a more valuable location in Kent, Sussex or Surrey.

The local authority, Shepway District Council, at one stage attempted to petition Parliament to ensure that the building remained inside its area but it allowed the action to lapse. The council did have a letter from Union Railways in May 1996 saying the company would try to find a suitable local site, but no piece of land has yet been bought.

Geoff and Angela Hughes, tenants of Talbot House

> 'The hall will be worth much more if it is moved to a new setting in Kent, Sussex or Surrey'

"British Rail was prepared to rebuild it in the village, partly as compensation for all the disruption the line is going to cause here, but Union Railways has a different attitude and wants to make money out of it," said Tony Orsbourne, chairman of Sellindge Parish Council. He has fond memories of Talbot House because, for a time, he used to live in it.

There is now no chance of it being given over to community use, he says, and the fear is that it could easily leave the area. Negotiations over a site in the village are bogged down, and the local authority says no planning application to re-erect elsewhere in the village has been received.

With work on the link due to start next February, time is running out, and if no suitable site is prepared in the village, Union Railways will have to find one elsewhere. It has a strong financial incentive to do just that. Moving the house to Sussex could easily add £200,000 to its final sale value.

A spokesman for Union Railways said no final decision had been taken on a new site, but a number of plots were being considered. He declined to name them.

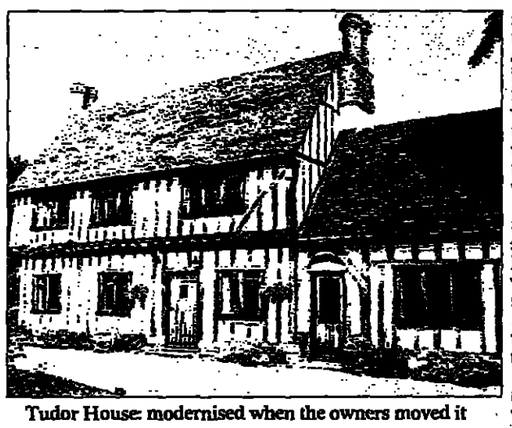
The house has seven bedrooms, two bathrooms and a magnificent inglenook fireplace about 12ft wide in the drawing room. Union Railways lets the house at £485 a month to Geoff Hughes, a train driver who lives in it with his wife Angela and their three children. Early next year the family is due to move to another house owned by the railway company.

"It has been a lovely place to live. We have enjoyed being here, but in winter it is a bit like sitting in a freezer," says Mrs Hughes. Mr Hughes says his only real complaint is that the kitchen is rather small for such a large house, and because it was once converted into three cottages there is no proper passage from room to room upstairs.

The location is hardly ideal: the house stands a few yards from the M20 on one side and the existing railway on the other. Outside, the traffic thunders by, but inside it is peaceful. The house is below the road and railway, and its thick walls, with few windows on the motorway side, keep the noise down.

KENT NEWS & PICTURES

Talbot House may have a charming air, but its location, hemmed between a motorway and the existing railway line, is less than ideal



Tudor House: modernised when the owners moved it

MOBILE HOMES

MOVING houses from place to place is expensive, but not as difficult as you might imagine. It helps if the building has a timber frame, as with Talbot House, because the securing pegs can be removed from the beams and the structure taken down without damaging it.

Brick buildings are more troublesome, as Dennis Pearson, from Ipsden near Henley-on-Thames, discovered when he offered his house for sale at an asking price of £2,500, the only catch being that the buyer would have to take it away.

The tiny, three-bedroom, turn-of-the-century farm worker's cottage stands close to a road, and Mr Pearson and his family decided to build a new house further back on their land.

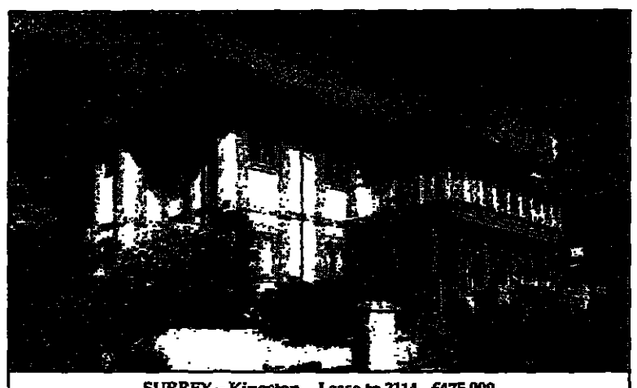
A condition of the planning permission was that the old cottage should be removed within three months of them moving in, which they did on September 22.

"WE HAVE had so many time-wasters in the past two weeks that I think I may pull the house down myself," he says. "I am fed up with people trying to work out how best to tackle the job."

Tudor House now stands in the Suffolk village of Rickinghall at the top of a sweeping gravel driveway, but it began life in an urban setting in Stowmarket, before being moved in 1958.

Like Talbot House, it was also once three cottages. When it was moved the owners were able to rebuild to modern standards, but there is enough detailing left for it to look the Tudor part. It has high ceilings — unusual in such a cottage — with carved timbers, an oak staircase, oak floors and leaded-light windows.

It is for sale at a guide price of £215,000 through Bedfords in Bury St Edmunds: 01284 769 999.



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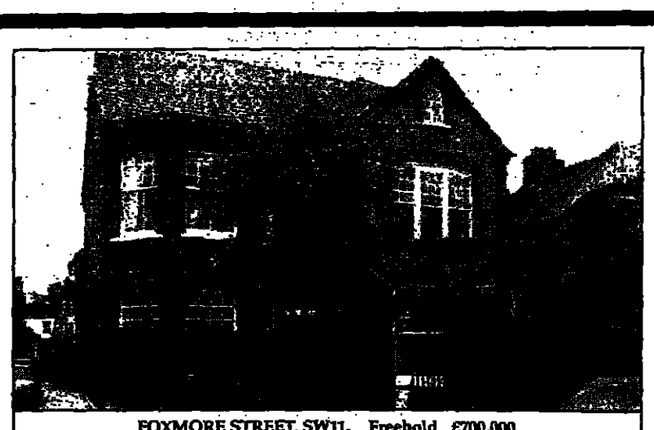

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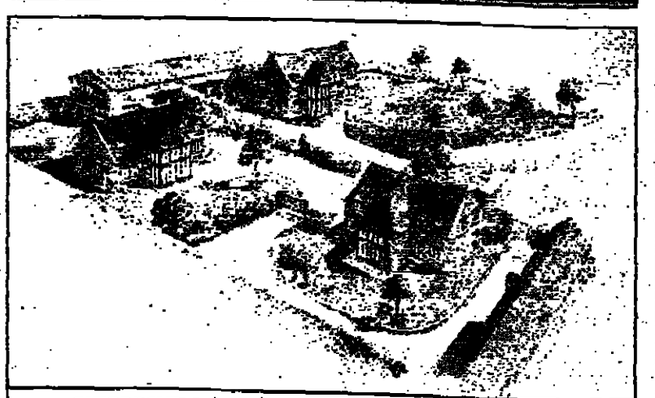

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Where East meets West Country

PROPERTY OF THE WEEK

Author Michael Dobbs with a few of his faithful friends

Katherine Bergen senses good karma in the farmhouse where Michael Dobbs invented Urquhart

DES JENSON

The sitting room at the 17th-century farmhouse, now on the market at £550,000, is decorated with oriental artefacts. Local craftsmen made the specially designed furniture

East meets West Country in the Dorset home of Michael Dobbs, the best-selling author, which is for sale for £550,000.

In the vast living room statues of Buddha stand on pieces of furniture made by Dorset craftsmen. Sitar music drifts from the CD player in Mr Dobbs's study, the room where he conceived Francis Urquhart, the Machiavellian protagonist of his political novel *House of Cards*.

The 17th-century building was a working farmhouse until 15 years ago and still has a traditional thatched roof and the two huge open fireplaces, exposed beams and flagstone floors — though now with under-floor heating — in the sitting room. The furniture, by contrast, is modern and unusual. Designed for the house and crafted by students of John Makepeace, it too is for sale if the buyer is interested.

The other half of the main reception room is used as a dining room. The ten-seater dining room table has a morbid past. "Bridport [less than two miles away] was the centre of the rope-making industry," says Mr Dobbs. "We rescued the wood for this table from the old Victorian factory where the ropes, including hangman's nooses, were made."

The thought does not put him off his food — "Capital punishment is not for me, although there are plenty of people who I would like to see strung up," he observes drily.

The desk where he writes his political novels — the latest is nearly completed — overlooks a scene of bucolic splendour which, on the day of my visit, was enlivened by the fragrant activity of a muck-spreading tractor creeping up and down the fields.

The sprawling five-acre grounds contain a Japanese garden, vegetable garden, an orchard and flower meadow

The view is dominated by the cone of Colmers Hill, a landmark visible for miles around. Mr Dobbs mentions that the dozen Scots pines at the top of the hill grow on the site of an old plague pit.

"This is said to be one of the most haunted areas of the country — which may affect those of a sensitive disposition. As you know, I am one of the least sensitive of people."

The house, too, may be haunted. A previous resident, who was born in the house, told Mr Dobbs that the ghost of an old monk used to come and sit on her bed. He has not seen the monk but Mrs Dobbs, a Buddhist lama, reckons any evil spirits would be turned back by the Buddhas.

Francis Urquhart, Tory party mascot, guards the study

Mr Dobbs himself keeps evil spirits at bay with the large cardboard figure of Urquhart which dominates his study. So effective is it that it was even used as a mascot in a Conservative Party leadership campaign. Close inspection reveals the inscription "J.M. for PM".

The main bedroom has an extraordinary hand-made bed with great carved orbs for legs. "When my wife was discussing the design, she asked for a bed with balls and this was the result," explains the author.

The adjacent bathroom has the kind of view which makes you want to stay in the Jacuzzi all day. Mr Dobbs likes to watch fox-hunting from his tub, and he points out how the beauty of the countryside owes much to hunting: "I have to thank the fox-hunting fraternity for my view — lots of copses and trees and hedgerows, the kind of countryside they like to preserve. I always shout for the fox, so that the hounds get better excercise. The hunts around here are very bad, anyway — the most they catch is a cold unless they're chasing a fox with three legs or a bad case of mange."

The oriental theme in the house extends to the gardens. The five-acre grounds were a wilderness when the Dobbs and their two children moved in five years ago.

Now there are distinct areas. There is a Japanese garden, a careful arrangement of gravel and rounded stones with a simple wooden bridge and seat looking over a pond.

There is also a walled vegetable garden, an orchard and a wild flower meadow, and Mr Dobbs has just planted 300 native broadleaf trees. Drought should never prove to be a problem here: a water diviner has detected running water beneath the grounds.

The cottage in the grounds includes a Buddhist shrine room painted in vibrant reds and yellows, three double bedrooms and a kitchen. It could be a self-sufficient guesthouse or a useful adjunct to the main house, which has only three bedrooms (although there is planning consent for the construction of a two-storey extension).

In addition to glorious views and a ghostly monk, the house's buyer will also inherit the family of owls in the barn. Generations have been reared there in the nesting box, and Mr Dobbs is very fond of them. He once even dismantled the small wood-burning stove in the television area off the kitchen to rescue an owlet that had fallen down the chimney during a storm.

After refreshing the confused creature in the rain, he returned it to the barn only for the family labrador to bring it back indoors.

● *Agent: Humberts 01308 422215.*

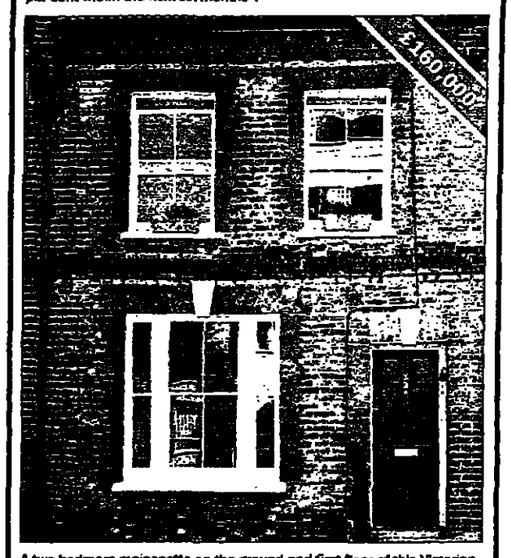
HOMESWAP

RISING house prices could push up the cost of home loans, according to experts from the Nationwide Building Society, who published a report on house prices this week. They say average house prices in the UK gained 12.9 per cent in the past 12 months, rising 1.7 per cent this month, and are still moving up, despite increased mortgage interest rates.

Demand for homes remains strong, particularly in London and the Southeast, where prices have been pushed up by a lack of supply. Despite higher prices, the shortage of properties on the market is still a problem for buyers in most areas and transactions are falling.

"It is disappointing that supply has so far failed to respond to higher prices. Nevertheless, this is likely to be temporary and an expected increase in properties coming onto the market will see an eventual easing in price pressures. However, recent economic indicators might force another interest rate rise this autumn," said Dr Sanderson, head of research at the Nationwide.

The Halifax is more cautious. Its House Price Index, also published this week, said average house prices in the UK are 6.9 per cent higher than in September last year. Gary Marsh of the Halifax said: "The market is recovering steadily, but the number of transactions remains low. Even in London, the peak has passed. We expect bank base rates to rise to 7.5 per cent within the next six months".



A two-bedroom maisonette on the ground and first floor of this Victorian terraced house with a 43ft rear garden, in Temperley Road, Wandsworth, London SW12, is on the market at £160,000, for a share of the freehold. (Douglas & Gordon, 0181-673 0191).

Spend a little more (£165,000) in North Yorkshire, and you could buy Lime Tree House, a detached three-bedroom, three-reception room, stone-built period cottage, with a walled garden, in East Whitton, near Leyburn, Wensleydale. (GA Town & Country 01969 623451).

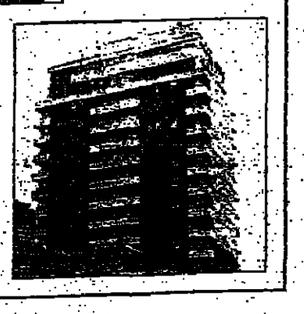
In Scotland, £165,000 will buy Hilton farmhouse, a five-bedroom, three reception room, traditional farmhouse in an acre of garden, on the Angus coast, overlooking Lunan Bay and the North Sea. It includes a range of outbuildings and paddocks. (Savills, 01356 622187).

CHERYL TAYLOR

DREAM HOMES

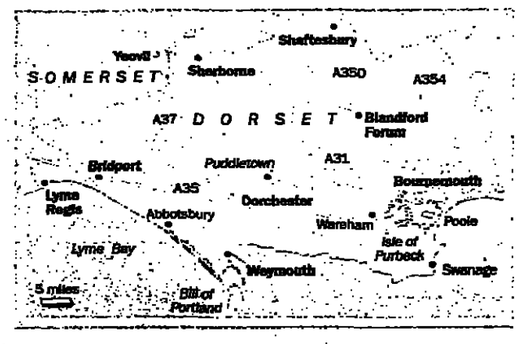
RUTH Rendell CBE, crime novelist, lives with her husband in a five-bedroom pink 16th-century timber-framed longhouse (right) in Polstead, Suffolk. The Grade II listed house is set in 11 acres of Stour valley woodland and has a conservatory and a detached cottage.

BARONESS James of Holland Park OBE (P.D James), author, lives with her cat in a Georgian Regency house (left) in Holland Park, London. The house, with a basement kitchen overlooking a courtyard, houses her collection of court trials. James also has a house in Oxford.



BARON Archer of Weston-Super-Mare, author and parliamentarian, lives in a penthouse flat on top of a former 1960s office block (right) on the banks of the Thames in Lambeth, London. The flat has stunning 360 panoramic views and overlooks the Houses of Parliament.

MARKET COMMENT



FEW English counties remain untouched by the web of motorways that is spanning the land, but Dorset is one of them. The A303 from London to Exeter is the nearest dual carriageway.

Expect two and a half hours for a reasonable run from London to Sherbourne, and add another hour to Lyme Regis in the west. It is two hours from London Waterloo on the "fast" train service to Shaftesbury. This is not the stuff of a commuters' dreams, and the county has therefore tended to be immune to the creeping expansion of the London daily commuter belt.

This has enabled Dorset to preserve much of its sleepy charm. It has also preserved a longstanding price differential in the property market but that is tending to narrow with the emergence of a more flexible breed of buyers.

"Seventy-five per cent of our mailing list now is to people outside the area, mainly London and the Home Counties," says Julian Bunkall of Jackson-Stops & Staff's Dorchester office. Dorset's market is doing very nicely from retired people and second-home owners but increasingly is attracting younger families and middle-aged people looking for a change of life. Some wage-earners commute weekly or go up to London for a few days a week; others run their business from home with a computer and a fax. The strong reputation of the county's schools is a bonus.

North and east Dorset are more accessible for those who have to travel regularly, and property there commands a 5-10 per cent premium. But Martin Bowen-Ashwin at Humberts in Bridport suggests this has been eroded to some extent by the improvements to the A303, and by the fact that "buyers in west Dorset aren't wanting to commute; it's a different kind of market".

Prices have risen between 10 and 20 per cent during the past year, though most excitement has been at the top end of the market, fuelled directly by lucrative house sales in London. Michael de Pelet, who acts for Knight Frank in Sherbourne, cites Buckshaw House which recently went on the market at £1m, attracted 60 viewers and four bidders, and has just sold for substantially more than the asking price.

THE coast itself is largely protected and it is very difficult to find property on it, except in centres such as the touristy and charmless Weymouth, or Lyme Regis, which does boast some fine period properties and considerable charm.

"Most buyers settle for inland alternatives within striking distance of the sea. Popular areas include the Bride Valley triangle between Bridport, Dorchester and Weymouth (Abbotsbury, Burton Bradstock); the area around Egerton Hill (Beaminster, Powerstock), Marshwood Vale west of Bridport (Whitchurch Canoncorum, worth moving to for the name alone) and the Lyme Regis hinterland, as well as towns such as Sherbourne, Blandford Forum, Wareham and Dorchester.

Small village cottages range between £60,000 and £90,000, and are eagerly snapped up as second homes. Julian Bunkall reports "a glut of interest and at least half a dozen bidders" for a little two-bedroom cottage with views that will be auctioned on October 22. He originally quoted £75,000 for it but now expects £100,000. Larger detached cottages sell for £150,000-£200,000.

At the top of the market, larger farmhouses and small manor houses start at £250,000, though many of the old properties have had their land sold off over the years.

"We're very short of property with more than two or three acres," observes Bowen-Ashwin. "An extra acre is likely to add £10,000 to £15,000 to the house price."

De Pelet agrees: "An old rectory with a few acres at the edge of a village is like gold dust." Expect to pay £600,000 plus if you are lucky enough to stumble across one.

FAITH GLASGOW

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THE TIMES

NORTH OF THE THAMES

FULHAM PARK GDNS SW6 Attractive mid-terraced family house with 4 bed, 2 bath, 2 receptions, conservatory, kit, day room & 25' gdn. Sought after location. £430,000 F/H Bushells 0171 731 2808.

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HOLLAND PARK Stylish 1 dbl bed apt, gge, views of comm gdns £179,950 0171 221 9044

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SOUTHGATE N14. 3 bd, 2 rec, end terr hse, gd area, gge, nr tube. F/H, £129,950. 0956 536210.

ST JOHNS WOOD. Luxury 4 bedrooms, 3 bathrooms, large reception. Tastefully furn. £800pw 0171 629 0501

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WC1 2 bed, port blk. 3rd flr. lift. 111 yr lse, nr tube £169,950. Banbury & Ball 0171 833 4466.

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WC1 1 bed flat, 4th flr, port man blk, lift, L/H. £110,000. Banbury & Ball 0171 833 4466.

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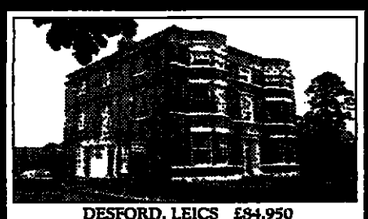
RAMSGATE, KENT £150,000
Detached family home, sea front location. 3-bedrooms, lounge, kitchen/breakfast room, dining room, cloakroom, bathroom, tandem garage, gas fired central heating, secondary double glazing, garden front & rear.
COOKE & CO. 18 KING STREET, RAMSGATE 01843 851322

CLACTON-ON-SEA, ESSEX £179,995
One mile from mainline railway station, spacious detached residence close to seafront. 2 large reception rooms, conservatory/sun lounge, fitted kitchen, utility, shower, cloakroom. 5 bedrooms on first floor, further 2 second floor rooms.
JOHN V STORY & CO, 76 STATION RD, CLACTON-ON-SEA 01255 221121

LITTLE KINGSHILL. OFFERS £275,000
Family house located in Chiltern Hills. 5 bedrooms, bathroom, lounge, dining room, study, kitchen/breakfast room, utility, triple garage, side and rear gardens. Gardener's WC.
HYDEGATE ESTATES, 2 POND APPROACH, HOLMER GREEN, BUCKS. 01494 717889 Hydegate

NEAR HAWKSHEAD OFFERS AROUND £325,000
A fine stone built Lakeland house with plenty of character, and 5/6 bedrooms. Extensive wooded grounds of approx 4 acres. Close to Lake Windermere.
MATTHEWS BENJAMIN, LOUGHRIGG VILLA KELSICK ROAD, AMBLESIDE 015394 32220



DESFORD, LEICS £84,950
Delightful quality apartment on 2 floors in listed building near to church. Magnificent entrance and stairs, 17' x 16' drawing room, 16' kitchen/diner, 2 beds, luxury bathroom. Garage. Storage to cellar.
GREGORY RESIDENTIAL, TOWN HALL SQ LEICESTER 0116 255 3673

CLOCK TOWER MEWS, N1 £245,000
Centrally heated 3 bedroom mews house with its own secluded 28' south facing terraced garden. Kitchen/diner, fitted bathroom, cloakroom & second WC, wide garage. Quiet location.
EVANS BAKER, 6 CAMDEN WK, CAMDEN PASSAGE, ISLINGTON 0171 354 0066

NR CHICHESTER, WEST SUSSEX OIRO £500,000
Victorian Rectory on main road converted to 6 bedroom guesthouse with 2 self contained flats, 3 garages, stables, large barn. 2 acre garden, paddock etc.
SEYS-WILLIAMS, 8 SOUTHGATE CHICHESTER 01243 787868

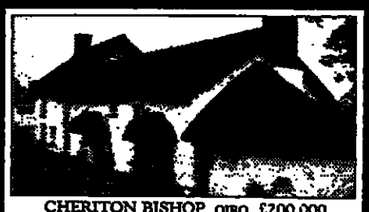
FLACKWELL HEATH, BUCKS £259,950
An individual detached family home, attractively styled occupying a popular village location. 4 bedrooms, 3 reception and plans have been drawn to extend the existing accommodation if required. (STPP)
WOODMAN & PARTNERS, 12 STRAIGHT BIT FLACKWELL HEATH, BUCKS 01628 851300

SPAIN AND SUSSEX, APROX £148,000
Country homes in Menorca, Mainland Jávea and East Sussex. Photo shows Menorcan farmhouse approx half acre. 3 beds, 2 baths plus sep apartment guests/income, pretty garden, pool, quiet village. Ask for our list. Sussex and Spain.
FORESTERS, 17 HIGH ST, HEATHFIELD, EAST SUSSEX 01435 865477 Foresters

KENNINGTON ROAD, LONDON
A substantial Georgian house built circa 1787. The property offers a particularly large first floor drawing room, separate dining room, study, 4 bedrooms, 2 bathrooms, kitchen & garden. 5 minutes from Waterloo Intl terminal.
DANIEL SMITH RES, 191 KENNINGTON LA, LONDON 0171 735 9510

NR STOCKTON HEATH, KNUTSFORD £299,000
A detached late Victorian house of superb proportions. Accommodation over 3 floors includes 5 bedrooms, large cellar games room, 3 large reception rooms. Garage and outbuildings. Views over canal and open farm land.
JAMES SEAR, 311 HIGH ST EPPING, ESSEX 01992 560056

ASHFORD CARBONELL OIRO £295,000
Splendid residence set in own grounds. 5 miles from Ludlow. 4 bedrooms, drawing room, sitting room, utility & kitchen. Large double garage, mature gardens with stream & waterfall, paddock of approx 3.5 acres.
McCARTNEYS, 16-17 HIGH ST, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE 01584 872153 McCartneys



CHERITON BISHOP OIRO £200,000
A well-maintained detached character thatched Grade II residence with 4 bedrooms. Barn. Gardens. Orcharding. Approx 2 acres. Stream. Due to job relocation, realistic price sought for this property.
GORDON VICK & PARTNERS, BRIDGE HSE OKEHAMPTON, DEVON 01837 52371

BECKENHAM, KENT OIRO £300,000 F/H
An impressive period home with extensive accommodation over three floors. 70' walled garden, garage, conservatory, about 1/2 mile from Beckenham High Street. Must be viewed.
CHARLES EDEN, 1 KELSEY PARK RD, BECKENHAM, KENT 0181 663 1964 Charles Eden

WORCESTERSHIRE POA
A very fine half timbered listed Grade 1 country house set in delightful countryside with excellent access to M5/M42 motorway connections. Formal gardens, lake, pasture land approx 85 acres.
QUANTRILLS, 4-6 HIGH ST, SUTTON COLDFIELD WEST MIDLANDS TEL. 0121 354 9229

HOOK HEATH, WOKING £550,000
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LYNCH & COMPANY, 93 HIGH ST HORSELL, WOKING TEL. 01483 751000

SOMERSET £250,000
A brand new superior detached house fitted to a high standard. 0.4 acre garden with views over open countryside. Castle Cary (1mile/rly) 3 miles Bruton 3 miles.
T.R.G. LAWRENCE & SON, 20 PRINCES ST YEOVIL, SOMERSET 01935 410777

SOMERSET £250,000
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T.R.G. LAWRENCE & SON, 20 PRINCES ST YEOVIL, SOMERSET 01935 410777

PINNER, MIDDX £359,950
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GIBBS GILLESPIE, 1 CHAPEL LANE, PINNER, MIDDX 0181 866 2777

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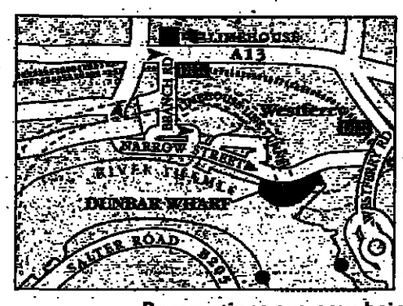

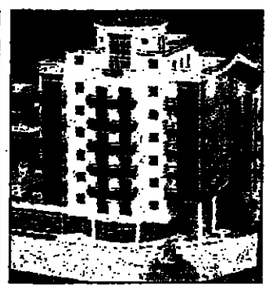

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Carol Price on the beagles saved from grisly animal experiments

Rescued from a dog's life

"People said the place reminded them of a concentration camp. Even experienced animal welfare workers were shocked as terrified dogs tried to curl themselves up as small as they could in the back of their kennels to hide from us. Many rescuers were in tears."

Andrew Butler of the charity Peta (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals) is recalling his recent mission, along with other rescue agencies, to remove 126 dogs from Consort, a Hereford-based laboratory beagle-breeding centre, before it closed down two weeks ago. The charities paid £250 each for the dogs to save them from being sold to the research industry. "They wouldn't give them away," says Mr Butler. "We got them cheap because they'd saturated the research market."

The dogs were destined for gruesome chemical toxicity tests but instead they are waiting for new homes in rescue centres nationwide. Mr Butler says: "The suffering these dogs go through in laboratories is immense. They are injected with, or force-fed, anything from pesticides to household cleaning substances for up to 40 days. Their fur may be shaved off and their skin exposed to all manner of chemicals and solvents. They suffer nausea, vomiting, convulsions and other agonies and are seldom given any pain relief before they are put down."

Sir Paul McCartney and his wife Linda, long-time anti-vivisectionists, gave Peta £8,000 towards buying the Consort dogs. "They thought it a privilege to save them from lives of misery and suffering, and afford them the chance to be viewed as something more than just test tubes with tails."

Consort, which has declined to comment on any aspect of its work, is the third beagle breeding establishment of its kind to have closed down in the past six years. Although breeding beagles can be lucrative, with dogs commanding as much as £700 each within the research industry, ever-growing public protest against animal testing continues to hamper the operations of breeders and research staff.

Earlier this year, a chilling Channel 4 documentary, *Countryside Undercover*, helped expose the appalling research done on the breed. Beagles were seen being brutally treated by staff at a Huntingdon laboratory, and two people were successfully prosecuted for cruelty.

Around 7,944 experiments were conducted on beagles last year. But why should they be so targeted for research as a breed? Lisa Tooley of the National Canine Defence League — whose centres have taken 60 of the Consort dogs — says: "It's because they are a naturally docile, loyal and submissive breed. They have an almost gormless willingness which makes them ripe for exploitation in this way."

Ruth and Alan Young, of Beagle Rescue, in Warwickshire, took eight Consort dogs for rehoming and have found their new charges "incredibly nervous. They didn't seem to know what grass was. They had never eaten from a bowl and were terrified of men."

Mrs Young says: "Bit by bit we have won their trust but we're going to have to be very careful about the homes they go to. It will have to be someone who is at home all day, has plenty of patience and understanding and no small children." Sarah Kite, who works for the British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection, has taken four beagles from research breeding centres, including a 15-month-old dog, Harvey, from Consort. She says: "It's a myth that such dogs can't make good pets, despite being deprived of early socialisation with people. With the right care and understanding they can adapt quickly, though they need to be toilet-trained.

Linda: gave £8,000

Miss Kite says: "The early days with a rescued beagle are heartbreaking. I inherit a dog with no name, just an identity number and ear tattoo, watch it take its first run to freedom, and then realise what a different fate it could have had."

Andrew Butler took on two beagles from Consort — an eight-month-old bitch called Misty and a six-month-old dog called Boo. He says: "Initially they were afraid of their own shadows but are now growing in confidence every day."

Mr Butler maintains that many people still cannot grasp the reality of a laboratory dog's plight until they meet his two. "I'll be out walking Misty and Boo on a nearby heath and other dog owners will come and admire them. When I tell them they were destined to be used in chemical experiments, they are astonished. My dogs aren't a special, unfeeling species designed to be used in such a way. They are pets just like theirs."

● Consort Beagles needing new homes can be found at: The NCDL (Evesham, Worcestershire): 01386 830613; Freshfields Animal Rescue (Merseyside): 0151-931 1604; Beagle Rescue (Warwickshire): 01789 764888; Dorset Animal Rescue: 01963 362539; Last Chance Animal Rescue (Kent): 01732 865530.

NEWS TEAM

Some of the beagles which Paul and Linda McCartney saved from a research laboratory. They are now at rescue centres waiting for good homes

A VET WRITES

Q Fred, my seven-year-old boxer, developed a lump near his lower eye-tooth. It worried me (but not Fred) so we went to the vet. He called it an epulis and didn't seem to be very concerned, although he did say it could be removed. I'm not happy. Can you tell me more?

A An epulis is a benign (non-malignant) overgrowth of gum tissues. Most of those I've seen have been on short-coated dogs such as boxers and bull terriers. Finty, my staffy, has a small epulis on her lower jaw around her incisors. It doesn't worry her or me. Problems arise if the epulis grows and interferes with the dog's bite. This can happen when the growth is on the upper jaw and so drops down between the teeth. Then it needs to be removed surgically. Often, dogs won't sit still for dentistry under local anaesthesia, so a general anaesthetic is necessary. A tiny risk, but little more than that of an average car journey.

Q My neutered tom cat Blackie has suddenly developed a haematoma on his ear. It's an enormous swelling, the size of a very large grape. The vet's going to operate in a few days and assures me the ear will get back to something close to its normal shape. What is a haematoma and what causes it?

A A haematoma is a blood clot, and one in the ear is called a thick ear — yes, just the same as human boxer's. Blackie's ear has suffered violence, too. Probably because he's been shaking his head or scratching his ear because there's some trouble in his ear canal. The operation consists of removing the blood clot and then keeping the two sides of the skin of the ear close together — by stitches or compression bandages — so there's no space left for another clot to form. It's important to find, and treat, the cause of the irritation so Blackie stops scratching. He may be left with a slightly wrinkled ear but if a haematoma is left to resolve by itself the ear will be severely deformed.

JAMES ALLCOCK

Gladys sticks her neck out

The future of several animal species in Uganda is in the hands of one woman – a recent London graduate

The career paths leading from the Royal Veterinary College in London on graduation day are clearly signposted: they connect to a lifetime spent ministering to cats and dogs and hamsters, to cows and pigs and horses.

Gladys Kalema took an unmarked route that bypassed all the usual applications of a vet's skills, into a high-octane job which few graduates will see so early in their working lives. Last year, at the age of 26, she became the Ugandan Wildlife Service's chief (and only) vet, the first person to fill the post for 30 years and easily the youngest.

Her job specification is daunting. Uganda's wildlife service has a staff of wardens, but very little to ward, in ten national parks and ten game reserves. In the 1970s Idi Amin's soldiers began butchering the teeming wildlife, a practice that continued throughout a decade of unrest.

Rhinos became extinct there in the 1980s; elephants are down to 3,000 from 60,000, and there are just 100 giraffes left, many of them sick. Kalema's task is to restock these "charismatic" species and protect the star animals, notably mountain gorillas, in a department so under-resourced that, at first, she had to borrow her mother's car to get around. She decides which animals to move, and must be on hand to administer tranquillisers and to monitor their health in transit.

Kalema was two years old when Amin killed her father, a minister in the previous government. Her mother, who later became an MP in the Ugandan parliament, sent her to school in Scotland and then to veterinary college. Her ambition was always to work with wild animals.

The job came to Kalema almost by default. She sent the report on her college project on parasites in gorilla dung to the director of Uganda's national parks. "I told him I thought they needed a vet and I was the right person. They advertised but I was the only one with the relevant experience."

If Kalema did nothing else, caring for half the world's surviving population of 650 mountain gorillas would alone justify her wages. The world's television viewers discovered this massive primate when one sat delicately on Sir David Attenborough in the series *Life on Earth* in 1973. Since then the gorillas, whose territory overlaps the neighbouring Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, formerly Zaire, have suffered grievously from war and poaching.

Now, for $150 (£95) each, tourists can be led through the forest and come within five metres of a gorilla — no closer, for fear of transmitting diseases such as measles and flu. The mountain gorilla is perhaps the best example in the world of a rare wild animal ascribed an economic value in its natural habitat and given full state protection. Kalema's job is to keep this national asset alive.

The gorillas make a small but viable population. Elsewhere in the national parks the usual animals are either not there or are present in trivial numbers which are dangerously out of balance with the creatures around them. If Uganda stays calm, wildlife may, in time, return by itself. But Kalema believes the country cannot wait. Animals must be brought in to boost tourism and provide funds to expand her work.

Kalema has begun the difficult and expensive business of translocation. It has not been attempted in Uganda since some white rhinos were moved in 1960. She took a six-week crash course with the Kenya Wildlife Service and practised firing tranquillising darts in her back garden — each dart costs £25 and there is only one chance to hit the target.

One park had only seven giraffes, six males and a female. "If the female died and the others fell ill, that would have been the end of the giraffes in the entire park," she says. In order to try to augment the depleted population, she went to Kenya and, with the aid of their wildlife services, brought back three young females. To her enormous pleasure, the immigrants were accepted by the resident population.

Later this year she plans to move crop-damaging elephants away from farmland and into a reserve.

Kalema predicts it will take 15 years for Ugandan wildlife to recover in the parks, if translocation continues. But her budget is desperately small for the immense task she faces. It can take two days from Kampala by poor roads to reach the most distant reserve. The rangers are less well equipped than the poachers. She needs money for drugs and equipment and to train more vets.

And yet, despite these difficulties, she feels more useful and fulfilled than she would be anywhere else. "At this moment my friends from vet school are reading the best way to treat a cat or dog, and here am I planning to translocate elephants. In my small way I am part of the reconstruction and rehabilitation of my country."

GARETH HUW DAVIES

● *Gladys, the African Vet is on BBC1 on Wednesday at 7pm*

BBC

Gladys Kalema in the Ugandan bush with two "patients"

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When sleepless and shell-shocked new mothers wonder if they will survive the battle, it's time to wheel out the secret weapon

Put the gun in the Tidy Corner

LIFE AND SOUL

JANE SHILLING

Oh, they are a late-blooming lot, my girlfriends. Well into their thirties, most of them, and only just now vaguely beginning to think about children. This is not because of any lack of encouragement from me. "Hadn't you better get a move on?" I find myself saying with tiresome frequency, reminding them that *I* myself was referred to, by the adolescent in a white coat presiding over the Scutari Antenatal Clinic of King's College Hospital, as an "elderly prima gravida" — and that was nearly *seven years* ago. (I took considerable umbrage at this and advised him, with all the dignity I could muster when lying like an upturned beetle on a length of sludge-green kitchen roll, with my petticoats over my head and my underpinnings around my ankles, to stow it.)

At long last they seem to be getting around to it, and not a moment too soon. It has been perfectly horrible, I can tell you, being the only mama among a clutch of nippy singletons, and elegant Childless Marrieds, who can't understand why one has reneged so pathetically on all that bullish pre-birth talk of how one is Not Going To Let It Interfere With One's Lifestyle. But *why* can't you come to dinner, they say testily. Just pop him into his pyjamas and bring him with you.

Once or twice, growing weary of explaining exactly why this is such a rotten idea, I have done just that — only to find myself being given the evil eye by the entire dinner table as I sit, murmuring soothing nursery rhymes under my breath and scattering forkfuls of boned quail with apricot and wild rice stuffing over the drooping child in my lap who has, as I *could have told my hosts in* advance, firmly declined to settle down quietly for the night in an unfamiliar bed, within earshot of the jolly shrieks of the grown-ups having a far more interesting time downstairs.

By some miracle of mismanagement, the two friends who *did* get pregnant at the same time as me both decided to flee the country and settle in France. This, it is true, provided the material for an interesting comparative study of English and French approaches to gestation and childcare. The French, for example, cheerfully sink gallons of health-giving Burgundy while *enceinte* (so good for *le morale*), but regard the domestic cat, that harbinger of *la toxoplasmose*, as though it were a giant, deadly bacillus.

The Brits, on the *other hand*, *banish* their husbands to the boxroom in order to curl up with Pusskin, whose feelings are going to be so badly hurt by the arrival of the Little Stranger, while remaining convinced that the ingestion of even one glass of sweet sherry during pregnancy will result in their giving birth to something with four sets of hind legs and a thick coat of ginger fur. The Frogs, furthermore, always so keen to improve on nature (just look at their gardens, and the way Frenchwomen are always On The Case of their hairdos) horrify the tender-hearted British (who secretly think this kind of interventionism rather common) with their briskly gung-ho *approach to circumcision*. Still, interesting as it has been to chart all these cultural differences, it is really no substitute for having someone with whom to share the little joys and sorrows of motherhood: the rash that is almost certainly meningitis; the alarming impulse to go around and harm Penelope Leach that grows in intensity each time you refer to her insufferably smug childcare bible; the astonishing, brutal exhaustion of the Infant Years (if it was the British Government doing it to the IRA, there would be cases in the European Court of Human Rights. As it is, all that stands between you and the total obliteration of your personality is your little phial of *Touche Eclat*).

But now, at last, my moment has come. Grey-skinned and punchy from lack of sleep, the new mummies of my acquaintance say hollowly that they don't know *how I did it. Oh, I say, you know, you just* hack on and hope for the best. What I am not admitting to (since even having sat next to a girl during finals is no guarantee that she won't try and pinch your nanny) is the Linda Factor.

Linda, despite the fact that she is (just!) young enough to be my daughter, could give Mary Poppins lessons in how to impose your will upon a small child. A friend whose business it is to know about these things once remarked, on hearing her account of Alexander's movements during the day, that he wished he could have her as a hostage negotiator. "Don't be silly," I said, "she's a *teenager*." But actually, on reflection, I could see what he meant. There you'd be on Day Three of your siege, ideology starting to wobble a bit, all hot and sticky in your scratchy black balaclava, wondering whether you might shoot the silly bat in the Chanel suit who keeps screaming in that infuriating fashion, and then suddenly, from outside, comes the calm voice of Linda through the megaphone, saying, "That's enough of that game now. Just put the Uzi down in the Tidy Corner and then we *can have chicken nuggets for tea*. And perhaps a Mr Man fairy cake for afters. Yes, I expect you can have Mr Psychotic, if that is the one you want . . ."

The only trouble is, she makes it all seem so seductively easy that I forget what hell it was before she came. When I was little, I always planned to have six children. Now, gazing into the face of my friend's newborn son, with his ancient, deep-blue gaze, his lashless eyes, and his gummy overbite, like that of a 100-year-old Galapagos tortoise, all I can *think* is that I had better get a move on.

When my wife gets the red card

MARC ASPLAND

Zola scores Italy's winning goal at Wembley in February

When it's Italy v England, and she's Italian, football comes home with a vengeance, **Simon Crompton** writes

EDWARD WEBB

Introduced to the delights of Italian culture by wife Mirella, Simon Crompton has had few qualms about cheering on their national football team. That all changes tonight

Seven years of marriage, and not once had England faced Italy in anger — until this year. I only hope our marriage can withstand its first real test.

During these years, my Italian wife Mirella and her family have ground out of me the ingrained England supporter's prejudices against Italian football. In the old days, when you talked to your friends about cynical Italian defending or complained about Continental cry-babies, there were grunts of agreement all round.

Now, in our cross-cultural household, such comments are greeted with the same look as when I pronounced tagliatelle with a "g".

On my wedding day, I was left waiting at the altar of the Italian church for ten sweaty minutes, while outside my wife-to-be and our priest relived the World Cup semi-final defeat of Italy by the accursed Argentinians.

In retrospect, the message at the pre-marital guidance sessions with Father Roberto could not have been clearer. The reverential tones in which Franco Baresi's name was proferred, the verbal replays of Toto Schillaci's unforgettable sequence of goals and the odes to his beautiful frog-eyes. And, most telling of all, the knowing looks that passed between the priest and my fiancée: "Poor Simon. He doesn't understand. He's English."

But I understand more with each passing year, and with each Italy game, Father Roberto's cross-football culture counselling has made increasing sense. I, too, have felt the seductive touch of the liberating, emotional, painful, glorious, frustrating, illogical, joyous experience of supporting the Italian football team.

I used to watch England play on television in London pubs — an experience fuelled by testosterone, abusive chanting, fist-clenching and large quantities of Carling Black Label. But England, God bless 'em, failed to qualify for the 1994 World Cup, and when Mirella dragged me to Bar Italia in London's Soho to watch Italy play, it didn't feel too treacherous to temporarily transfer my allegiance.

First, I had to learn some of the rules that bind the boisterous community of Italian supporters. I learnt to shake my head ruefully at the mention of the 1990 World Cup semi-final, and never to make a defence of any description of former coach Arrigo Sacchi.

> 'Mirella was sympathetic after England's defeat, and I tried not to be too embittered. But I am not sure things will be so civilised this time — especially if Italy fails to win'

Do not ever mention the words Diego Maradona: not if you value your football stamp collection. And never suggest an Italy supporter is perhaps a teensy weensy bit inconsistent in his or her opinions.

That inconsistency is one of the liberating and enduring glories of supporting Italy. No matter that last week you said Cesare Maldini had brought Italian football back to the flowing expressionism that Azeglio Vicini had given it. This week he betrayed you by not letting the team give vent to their natural talents: the man is the son of a donkey.

So what if last season Pierluigi Casiraghi was a stupid peasant who hadn't a clue what to do with the ball once he had it? Now that he faces you in triumph after scoring, he is a god. And no Sardinian is a true Italian. With the exception of Zola, of course.

When England and Italy were drawn in separate groups for the 1996 European Championships, I breathed a sigh of relief and agreed to go to all the Italy group games with Mirella and her brother.

I sat at the first match against Russia soaking up the Continental atmosphere, rubbing shoulders with some serious Armani, and mentally sniffing the cappuccino as the fans in the latest Italian team strip took their seats.

Then their voices filtered through: a thick Blackburn accent uttered "I can't believe he's got Ravanelli on the bench"; a Scouser moan of "Just our luck to be in the frigging group of death". There were thousands of them: adopted Italians just like me.

And I was up there with them, screaming at the ref, gesticulating my pain, bemoaning our misses with my neighbours, and shouting for all I was worth "*It-al-ia, It-al-ia*".

And, after the final group game against Germany, when Paolo Maldini applauded the crowd at the end of Italy's brave but vain attempt to stay in the competition, I think I was actually crying. I didn't know what was happening to me, but I knew Father Roberto would be proud.

But now . . .well, it had to happen. England against Italy for a place in the World Cup finals. Cruel fate decreed that the first leg should be on Mirella's birthday, so her present was tickets to the game at Wembley. Unwisely, I decided to support England at her side, among the tiny but fanatical Italian following.

But as I looked at the sea of red and white around me, I knew I was in the wrong place. When Italy scored, I found myself sitting while my Italian friends were jumping, and suddenly they all seemed stupid. The Italian defenders were dirty, the strikers looked surly, and they all started behaving like cry-babies.

Mirella was sympathetic after England's defeat, and I tried not to be too embittered. But I am not sure things will be so civilised this time — especially if Italy fail to win.

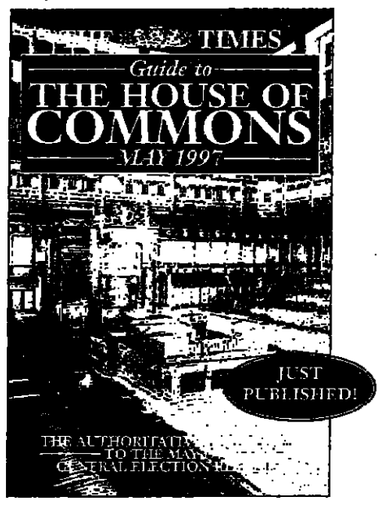
So this evening I will not be with Mirella and her family watching on television, or at Bar Italia. I will be round the corner in the pub, with my pint and 100 other England supporters watching on the big screen and screaming abuse at the cheating Continentals.

I am, of course, delighted that marriage to an Italian has re-educated my English palate to the delights of gnocchi, polenta, tiramisù and the exuberance of Italian football. But when you are faced with the choice, sometimes you just have to admit you are a meat and two veg man.

DAN CHUNG

A game of two halves: England go close and jubilant fans on the terraces are over the moon while, sick as parrots, the Italians hang their heads

Who won what and why?



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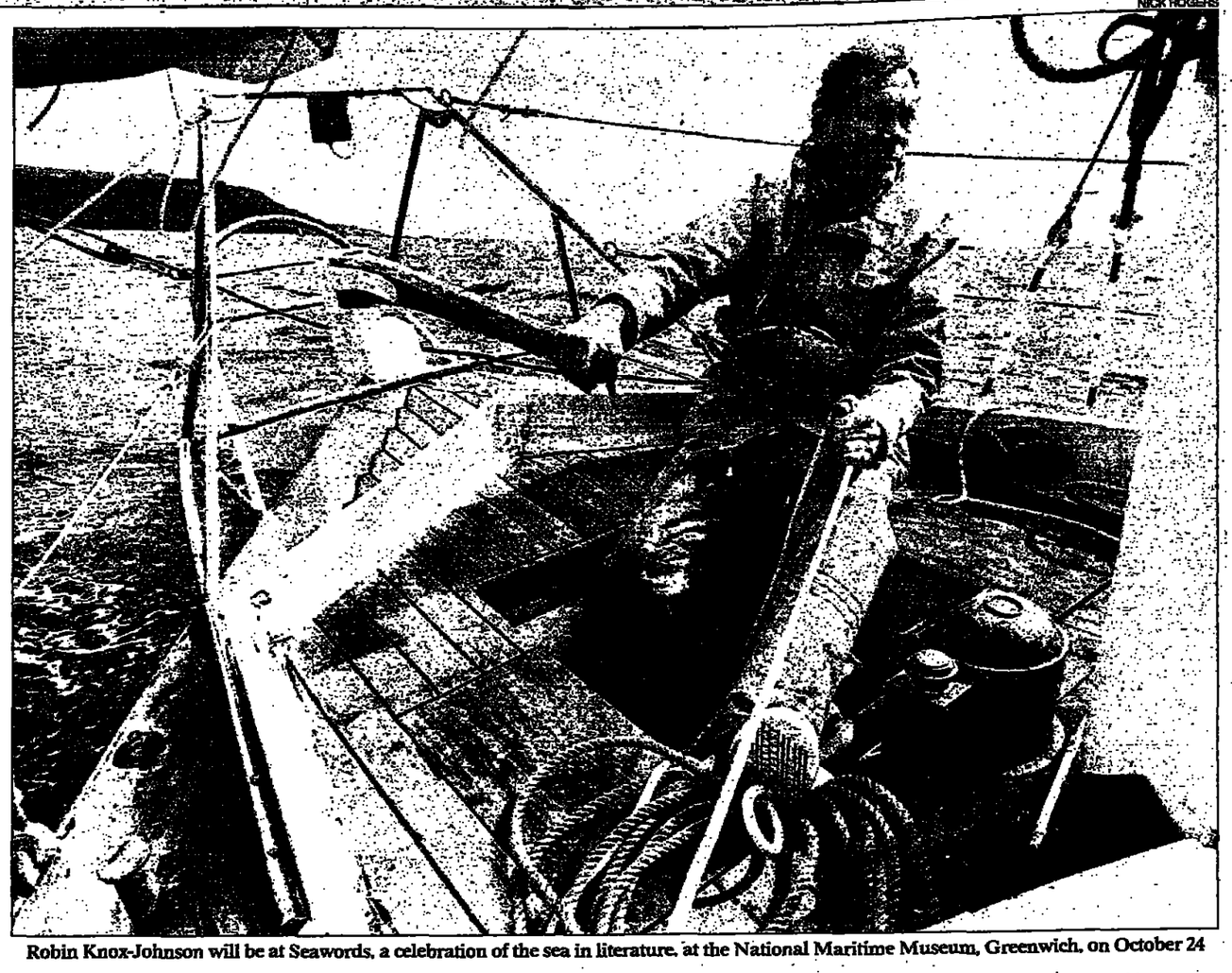
WEEKEND COURSES AND ACTIVITIES

Wallowing in a sea of words

NICK ROGERS



Robin Knox-Johnson will be at Seawords, a celebration of the sea in literature, at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, on October 24

OCTOBER 17-19

Nelson's early battles; The early romantics; The symphonies of Anton Bruckner; The masks of Apollo; The scientific revolution: At the University of Cambridge, Madingley Hall (01954 210636). Price per course £117, which includes tuition and full-board accommodation.

British landscape painting; Discovering fungi; Dancing for fitness and fun; Calligraphy for greetings cards: At the Earnley Concourse, Chichester, Sussex (01243 670392). Prices from £142 residential or £92 non-residential.

Cider and winetasting weekend on the Welsh Border: With Acorn Activities of Hereford (01432 830083). Price, all-inclusive of accommodation and tastings, £195.

Marine and coastal landscapes; the Jacobite challenge: At Belstead House College, Ipswich (01473 686321). Prices per course from £75-£95, inclusive.

Picture framing; Machine knitting: At Burton Manor College, South Wirral, Cheshire (0151-336 5172). Prices from £98, inclusive.

Hedgelaying weekend; Mosses; Land and freshwater molluscs; Six Suffolk villages: At the Flatford Mill Field Studies Centre, East Bergholt, Colchester, Essex (01206 298283). Prices from £79-£107, inclusive.

Piano workshop; Painting miniatures; Walking sticks: At Highham Hall, Bassenthwaite Lake, Cockermouth, Cumbria (017687 76276). Price per course £112, inclusive.

Intermediate French; Mixed media painting; Countryside walks and talks; Italian opera: At the Hill Residential Centre, Abergavenny, South Wales (01873 855221). Prices from £88-£98 inclusive.

Garden painting at a classic English house; King Arthur; Hypnosis and relaxation: At Knuston Hall, Irchester, Northamptonshire (01933 312104). Price per course from £98, inclusive.

Conservation weekends: With the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers, Wallingford, Oxon (01491 839766). A wide variety of conservation projects need the help of willing hands. Weekend rates, full board and accommodation from £20. Skills taught include dry-stone walling, thatching and hedge laying.

Pottery, throwing and turning; Watercolours for beginners; Opera and recital masterclass; Introduction to woodturning: At West Dean College, Chichester, Sussex (01243 811301). Prices from £150 residential and £97 non-residential.

Personalities of the First World War; British teddy bears; What's that bird?; Walking the Ridgeway Path: At Missenden Abbey, Great Missenden, Buckinghamshire (01494 890295). Prices from £159 full board, or £69 non-residential.

OCTOBER 24-26

Seawords: A weekend celebration of the sea in literature at the National Maritime Museum, Greenwich, south London, with writers Alexander Kent and Hammond Innes, yachtsmen Robin Knox-Johnson and Tony Bullimore. There is also a book fair. Entrance to sessions from £4-£8. Full details from the National Maritime Museum (0181-312 6678).

Magical musical weekend: At Brobury House, on the River Wye near Hereford (01981 500229). A special concert with guest soloist Kevin Tillet, formerly of D'Oyly Carte. Half-board accommodation for two nights and evening concert from £170.

Landscape photography; Willow basket making for beginners: At Alston Hall Residential College, Preston, Lancashire (01772 784661). Prices, all inclusive, from £75.

Walking in the Constable country; Fungi weekend; Painting with pastels; Improve your sketching and drawing: At the Flatford Mill Field Studies Centre, East Bergholt, Essex (01206 298283). Prices from £72-£102, inclusive of tuition and full-board accommodation.

Short Story Writing; Silk Painting for Beginners; T'ai Chi. All this weekend at Higham Hall, Cockermouth, Bassenthwaite Lake, Cumbria (017687 76276). From £112, residential.

Battlefields of the Welsh Marches; Trees and shrubs in autumn; Family history, who was grandma's grandma? At the Field Studies Centre, Preston Montford, Shrewsbury (01743 850380). Prices from £75-£99.

Positive ageing; Recorder ensembles; Painting with acrylics, at the Belstead House Centre, Ipswich, Suffolk (01473 686321). From £75-£95, inclusive.

Painting autumn leaves and berries; Medieval art and architecture; Touching stillness, at the Hill Residential College, Abergavenny, South Wales (01495 333777). From £88, full board and tuition included.

Jane Austen, an appreciation; Folk Weekend; Canal Boat Art; Wood carving. Four courses this weekend at Knuston Hall, Irchester, Northants: 01933 312104. Prices from £89 inclusive.

Stockmarket and investment for beginners; Map and Compass work for Improvers; Chinese brush painting: At the Old Rectory, Fittleworth, Sussex (01798 865306). Prices from £114 residential, £90 non-residential.

OCT 31-NOV 2

Family history: An advanced course for those with some knowledge of genealogical research. At Urchfont Manor, Devizes, Wiltshire (01380 840495). Price, full board and tuition included, from £99.

Gliding breaks: Learn to glide on a weekend break in the Cotswolds. From Charingworth Manor Hotel, Chipping Campden (01836 593555). Weekend rates from £200 per person half-board, based on two people sharing. Gliding lessons from £75 per day, or £32 for a trial flight.

Walking or Cycling Weekends in the Cotswolds with *Compass Holidays: 01242 250642.* Price includes itineraries, information pack and two nights bed and breakfast accommodation. Cycle hire available. Cycling breaks £88, Walking breaks £95.

Health and fitness breaks at *the Combe Grove Manor Hotel* and Country Club: 01225 834644. Indoor pool, gym, golf practice course, hydro and spa. Price £390 based on two people sharing, half board.

Outdoor activities for all age groups: With the Youth Hostels Association, at either Edale in Derbyshire or Llangollen in North Wales. Activities include cycling, hang-gliding, paragliding, caving, climbing and kayaking. From £93 per person, *including full-board* accommodation and instruction. Full details available on 01727 845047.

Bat and birdwatching weekends: At Panmaenuchaf Hall Hotel, Dolgellau, Gwynedd (01341 422129). Five different *varieties of bat can be seen in* the hotel attic including the lesser horseshoe bat. Weekend rates from £125, including half-board accommodation, access to attic bat-flying areas, and a bat information pack.

Landscape drawing and painting in autumn. At the Leonard Wills Centre, Nettlecombe Court, Taunton, Somerset (01984 640320). Prices, including full-board and tuition, from £184.

ROBIN NEILLANDS

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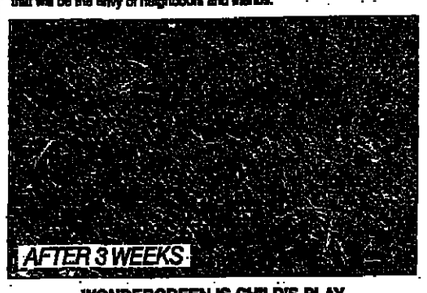

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Look up to God

Ruth Gledhill goes to synagogue to celebrate the Jewish New Year

THIS was the longest service in the Jewish prayer book and was to last for more than four hours. Rabbi Shlomo Levin heads a youthful orthodox congregation which is so successful that half the members had to meet in a hotel nearby because the synagogue could not hold them.

The occasion was Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, a festival lasting two days, which with Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement, ten days later, is one of the most important Jewish festivals. Jews believe their behaviour on this day determines whether or not God will inscribe them in the Book of Life.

The Torah, or Scrolls of the Law, from the first five books of the Bible, were taken out of the intricately decorated ark, processed around the floor of the synagogue, and five men took it in turns to read the portion for the day from Genesis 22. This dealt with Abraham's temptation by God to sacrifice his son Isaac.

Rabbi Levin began his sermon with a question: "Do we still need religion?" He conceded that such a full synagogue suggested some people might still need it. He noted that primitive societies were invariably religious, even if this was in a pantheistic or superstitious form. "In our society, as we become more sophisticated and more liberated, we have begun to drop many of the trappings of organised religion," he said. Most people no longer considered themselves religious, he added, evincing puzzlement that anyone still came to *shul* or synagogue. He then invited us to tell him why we were there. The women, seated in the gallery in accordance with Jewish tradition, were included. "Connection," said one member, to explain his presence. "But what are you connecting with?" demanded the rabbi. "The past," replied the congregant. "The sermon," said another. "Tradition," said one. "Family," said another. "We come here searching for something and in the hope of finding an answer," said one man. "It's an insurance policy," said another, provoking laughter. "To question," a woman said.

The rabbi was concerned that religion was becoming too easy, too banal. "The human being, of all creatures, stands on its hind legs," he said. "We alone are able to admire the magnificence of our universe." He urged us not to become trapped into looking down into the humdrum existence of our secular lives, but to take time to look up to God.

● *South Hampstead District Synagogue, 22 Eton Villas, London NW3 (0171-722 1807).*

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CHRISTOPHER BARKER

Rabbi Levin blows the traditional New Year *Shofar*

New battle for the macho man

Why does a former SAS man swap his stun grenades for a Bible? **Simon Freeman** investigates

Frank Collins, a former SAS soldier who became a Church of England minister, can relax today at home in Hereford with his wife and four children after touring the country to promote his first book. For a fortnight he has fielded the same questions from reporters. Could you kill someone now that you are a Christian? How did you feel when you stormed into the Iranian embassy in London in 1980? What is the SAS *really* like?

A representative from a combat magazine wanted to know whether Collins could kill a man with a single blow. A national newspaper reporter asked if he was surprised by the public's insatiable appetite for books by former SAS men, all writing in the same macho, military jargon about the same missions in Northern Ireland, the Falklands and the Gulf War, with a few other adventures, in the jungles of Central America or on the plains of Africa, thrown in.

We are sitting in his home in Hereford, which he is renovating himself, using the DIY skills that he picked up from his father, a carpenter and a hard-drinking Geordie who drifted into alcoholism and who never discussed religion. Collins is not a muscle-bound giant; like many SAS men he is quiet and small, though he has the tight skin of a man who eats well and exercises regularly, and looks younger than his 40 years. But his eyes pierce you, as if he is calculating whether he could "slot" you or, perhaps, whether you are really interested in hearing why Jesus was "a radical and a hard man".

Frank Collins, now a minister at Hereford, home base of the SAS

It is not easy to persuade him to discuss his faith or his career route as a minister, perhaps because he worries that he will be too blunt and become an unemployable celebrity cleric with a strange and violent past. But, once he realises that you are genuinely curious, he starts talking.

He thinks he is too young, energetic and impatient to become a traditional vicar, nestling down comfortably in a middle-class parish. That might happen, he concedes, when he is in his mid-fifties, but today he is drawn to angry young people in the inner cities; on the other hand, that would mean moving from Hereford, which he does not want to do.

He dreams of finding a job where he could combine his SAS skills and his new ones as a minister and counsellor. Perhaps, he thinks, he could become the spiritual equivalent of an aid worker, travelling to wars, famines and disasters, providing comfort to those who are bringing relief and who are often emotionally devastated by what they see, and simply being there for the people who are suffering, whatever their religion. This would involve travel to exciting and unpleasant places, which is what he still needs.

Frank Collins is much-changed from the young SAS trooper who crashed into the Iranian embassy in London almost 20 years ago, but he has to find challenges to test and sustain his faith. He says he was reluctant to leave the Army, where he had just started "the best job in the world" as chaplain to 5 Para, but he felt his presence would be embarrassing, because the Ministry of Defence is trying to stem the flood of books about the special forces. His own book was cleared for publication and could not have damaged his beloved SAS. He is a romantic, who believes SAS men are modern knights. ("I see them as crusaders, for God and valour, fighting for what is right.") He is addicted to the physical and the dangerous; he enjoys showing younger men that he can still run for ten miles with a 40lb pack strapped on his back, he climbs mountains and sky dives, and misses the glorious discomfort of Arctic warfare training.

The first part of his book is a dramatic account of how, as a working-class lad, he discovered that he had the physical and mental strength to qualify for membership of the most famous military unit in the world. Then he describes how his new-found faith frightened and puzzled him and alienated him from his family and friends.

He left the SAS in 1985 and worked as a bodyguard — what he calls his "wilderness years" — before accepting his calling: to become a minister. After studying at a theology college near London he returned to Hereford to become a curate and then rejoined the Army as a chaplain. He accepts that his status as a former SAS man helped in the Army because it gave him credibility. But it does not make any difference now. He works with teenagers in Birmingham and they do not care that he was in the SAS. "They think that they could do it if they wanted to and, anyway, the Army is part of another world to them," he says.

Collins hopes his book will sell well, but will be satisfied, he says, if it touches just one young man (or woman) by showing that masculinity — and the SAS is the ultimate expression of that — and Christianity are really not incompatible.

● *Frank Collins's book* SAS Hero to Spiritual Warrior: Baptism of Fire, *the astonishing true story of a man of God, is published by Doubleday at £16.99.*

Collins, second from left: "Minutes after this picture was taken, we were biting the heads off snakes for food"

We need to find time and space for reflection

Credo

JOHN HALDANE

As the year nears its end, a mood of reflection is appropriate, but even if we achieve such a mood, it is difficult to maintain it amid the daily rush and noise of our lives. Somehow, we need to keep a region of ourselves in quiet calm, tending it as a patch in which wisdom may take root.

In his notebook of 1939, Wittgenstein wrote: "My originality . . . is an originality belonging to the soil, rather than to the seed." Those seeking the spiritual life sometimes neglect this possibility. They are overactive in the belief that activity may produce some wonderful effect. Instead, it may be that their part is to listen, not to speak; to receive, not to give; to be the soil, not the seed.

In the spiritual domain, as in the rest of life, there is a division of labour: it is a mark of practical wisdom to know that this is so and to discern one's own proper part in any co-operative endeavour.

These thoughts are prompted by recent experiences of religious communities. Twice this year I have stayed in houses of Catholic orders. In early summer, I visited St Anselm's Benedictine Abbey, in New Hampshire, USA, and last month I stayed in the Jesuit residence in Louvain in Belgium.

A continent and 4,500 miles apart, and representing different forms of religious life and spiritual traditions, these communities nonetheless have much more in common with one another than each has with its secular surroundings.

The Benedictines are the oldest of the existing groups of monks and nuns, dating from the early 6th century, during which the former hermit Benedict built the monastery of Monte Cassino and established his precepts for the spiritual life, the "rule of St Benedict".

In founding the Jesuits 1,000 years later, St Ignatius of Loyola drew upon aspects of Benedictine spirituality and community order; in his own work, *Spiritual Exercises*, he added methods of meditation designed to help "rid the soul of all inordinate attachments and, after their removal, to seek and find God's will concerning the disposition of one's life".

Notice that Ignatius writes of a two-stage process: *first* detachment; *then* discernment. This is partly caution against rushing, trying to do too much, too quickly; and partly a reminder of the division of labour.

The initial stage of detachment depends for its success on our own efforts; but in the second, while we are to seek, it is not within our power to find the treasure: God has to reveal his will. Yet from the words of the Gospel we may be confident that God will not deny us: "ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find it; knock and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 6:7).

Sitting in the warm, dark chapel of the Louvain Jesuits, one begins to feel the burden of "inordinate attachments". Likewise, the experience of the talk-free communal meals in the similarly unadorned dining hall of St Anselm's bring home the fact that speech is often an occasion for deceit, defamation and distraction.

In years past, those in later life who had the means, the opportunity and the inclination sometimes left the world to end their days in religious communities. Less demandingly, one might take an annual retreat in one of the many religious houses that open their doors to laity. Finally, and more practically, one might set aside some time and space for silent reflection and begin the work of detachment in preparation for discernment, recalling the words "Be still and know that I am God".

● *The writer is Professor of Philosophy at the University of St Andrews*

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Church services tomorrow

Twentieth Sunday after Trinity.

BANGOR CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 Cymun Bendigaid; 11 Ch Euch, Sacerdotes Domini (Byrd); 3.15 Ch E; 5 Gosber.

BELFAST CATHEDRAL: 10 HC; 11 S Euch, Come let's rejoice (Amner); 3.30 Ch E, Thou wilt keep him (Wesley).

BIRMINGHAM CATHEDRAL: 9 MP; 9.15 HC; 11 Judges Service, I was glad (Parry), Rev R H A Eames; 4 Ch Euch, Mass for four voices (Byrd); 5 EP.

BLACKBURN CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 Ch M; 10.30 Euch, Jackson in G, Canon Galilee; 4 Ch E.

CANTERBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30, 11 S Euch, Tantum ergo (Duruflé); 3.15 Festival E, Responses (Walsh); 6.30 *Sermon & Compline.*

CARLISLE CATHEDRAL: 7.45 M; 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Ave verum corpus (Elgar), Archdeacon D Turnbull; 3 EP.

CHELMSFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch, Canon D Knight; 11.15 Justice Service; 6 Ch E, Bairstow in D.

CHESTER CATHEDRAL: 7.45 L; 8 HC; 10 Euch, Canon T Dennis; 11 M, Te Deum in F (Dyson); 3.30 E; 6.30 ES.

CHICHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Ireland in F; 11 S Euch, Ave verum (Philips), Canon W Pratt; 3.30 E.

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Oxford: 8 HC; 10 M; 11.15 S Euch, Canon Ward; 6 E, *Collegium Regale* (Howells).

CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 11 S Euch; 3.30 Ch E, Cantique de Jean Racine (Fauré).

COVENTRY CATHEDRAL: 7.40 MP; 8 C; 10.30 Euch, Mr J Filochowski; 3 German Lutherans; 5 Ch E, Responses (Rose).

DERBY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.45 S Euch, Darke in E, Canon G Marshall; 6 Ch E, Stanford in B flat.

DURHAM CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M, Stanford in C; 11.15 HC, Missa Brevis (Leighton), Canon M Perry; 3.30 E.

ELY CATHEDRAL: 8.15 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Mass for five voices (Byrd); 3.45 E, Rubbra in A flat.

EXETER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Missa brevis (Caesar), Canon P Price; 11.15 M, Responses (Rose); 3 E; 6.30 ES; 7 Harvest Thanksgiving.

GLOUCESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.15 Euch, Rev J Hubbard-Jones; 12.15 HC; 3 County Harvest Thanksgiving, Benedicite in B flat (Sumsion).

HEREFORD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells); 11.30 M; 3.30 E, Rev R North.

LEICESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10 M; 10.30 Euch, Leighton in D, Rev A Race; 4 Ch E, Stanford in B flat.

LICHFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 S Euch, Thou visitest the earth (Greene); 3.30 E.

LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M & L; 8, 9 Euch; 11 S Euch, Darke in A minor; 12.15 Euch; 3.30 Ch E; 6.30 E, The Dean.

NEWCASTLE CATHEDRAL: 7.30 M; 8 HC; 10 S Euch, Messe Solenelle (Langlais), The Archdeacon of Northumberland; 3.30 E, Dyson in D.

NEWPORT CATHEDRAL: 10.30 M, Let all the world (Vaughan Williams); 6.30 E, Go forth into the world in peace (Rutter).

NORWICH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 C; 10.30 Norfolk & Norwich Festival Euch, Coronation Mass (Mozart); 3.30 E, Canon M Makower; 6.30 Healing Service.

PETERBOROUGH CATHEDRAL: 9.30 M, Stanford in B flat; 10.30 Euch, The Bishop of Brixworth; 3.30 E.

PORTSMOUTH CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 C; 11 S Euch, Missa Eliensis (Wills); 6.30 E, Murrill in E, Ven G Knowles.

RIPON CATHEDRAL: 8, 9.30 Euch; 11.30 M, Britten in C; 12.30 Euch; 5.30 E, Kelly in C, Rev R Quick.

ROCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 M, Let all the world (Vaughan Williams); 10.30 S Euch, Canon D Winter; 3.15 E.

SALISBURY CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 10.30 Euch, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn), Canon J Davies; 3 Festal E, Canon J Osborne.

SOUTHWARK CATHEDRAL: 9 Euch; 11 Ch Euch, Messe Basse (Fauré); 3 Ch E, Purcell in G minor, Canon H Cunliffe.

SOUTHWELL MINSTER: 7.30 M & L; 8 HC; 9.30 C; 11 S Euch, Collegium Regale (Howells), Archdeacon of Newark; 3.15 E, Wesley in E.

TRURO CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9 M; 10 S Euch, Ubi caritas et amor (Duruflé), Canon M Boxall; 6 E, Purcell in G minor.

WAKEFIELD CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.15 C, Jesu the very thought (Lang), Canon R Gage; 11 Solemn Euch; 6.30 E.

WELLS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.45 S Euch, Missa papae Marcelli (Palestrina); 11.30 M, Stanford in C; 3 E, Rev E M Cross.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY: 10 M; 11 S Euch, Rev V Hunt; 11.15 Euch; 3 E; 5.45 Organ Recital; 6.30 ES, Rev J Goodall.

WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL: 7, 8, 9, 10.30 Solemn Mass, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn); 12 Mass; 2.45 Organ Recital; 3.30 Vespers and Benediction; 5.30, 7 Mass.

WINCHESTER CATHEDRAL: 10 M, Prevent us O Lord (Byrd), Canon C Stewart; 11.15 S Euch; 3.30 E, Wood in E.

YORK MINSTER: 8, 8.45 HC; 10 S Euch, Canterbury Service (Moore); 11.30 M, Turn back O man (Holst), Rev C Campling; 4 E.

ST ALBANS CATHEDRAL, Hertfordshire: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch, 11 Solemn Euch; 6.30 E, Christ be with you (Rose).

ST ASAPH CATHEDRAL, Clwyd: 8 HC; 11 Ch M, Blessed city (Bairstow), Rev K Goulstone; 3.30 EP.

ST DAVIDS CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch; 11.15 Ch M, Stanford in C, Canon Morgan; 6 Ch E, Sonata in G (Elgar).

ST FIN BARRE'S CATHEDRAL, Cork: 8 Euch; 11.15 S Euch, Canon P Rhys Thomas; 7 Ch E, Fourth Service (Batten).

ST MARY'S CATHEDRAL: 8 Euch; 10.30 S Euch, Darke in E minor, Canon J Millard; 3.30 Ch E, Stanford in C.

ST MACHAR'S CATHEDRAL, Old Aberdeen: 11 MS; Benedicite (Sumsion); 6 ES, Rev R Frazer.

ST PATRICK'S CATHEDRAL, Dublin: 8.30 Euch; 11.15 M, Hewson in E, Rev H C Mills; 3.15 Ch E.

ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL: 8 HC; 8.45 M; 11 S Euch, Mass (Stravinsky); 3.15 E, Rubbra in A flat, Venerable G Cassidy; 6.30 Service for Diocesan Week of Prayer.

RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CATHEDRAL, SW7: 10.30 Divine Liturgy, Kievan and traditional polyphony, Met Anthony.

ALL SAINTS, W1: 8 LM; 10.20 MP; 11 HM, Spatzenmesse (Mozart); 5.15 LM; 6 E.

ALL SOULS, W1: 9.30, 11.30 HC, Mr D Turner; 6.30 ES, Rev R Bewes.

THE ASSUMPTION, W1: 11 HC, Missa l'hora passa (Viadana).

CHELSEA OLD CHURCH, SW3: 8 HC; 10 Children's Service; 11 M, Rev Dr P Elvy; 12.15 HC; 6 E, Rev D Bean.

CROWN COURT CHURCH OF SCOTLAND, WC2: 11.15, Rev S Hood; 6.30 ES.

FARM STREET, W1: 8, 9.30 LM; 11 HM; 12.30, 4.15, 6.15 LM.

HOLY TRINITY BROMPTON, SW7: 9 HC; 11 MS; 5, 7.30 Informal Service, Rev N Lee.

THE ORATORY, SW7: 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, Ave Maria (Victoria); 12.30 Mass, 3.30 V & B; 4.30, 7 Mass.

ARMENIAN APOSTOLIC CHURCH W8: 11 Holy Mass, Archbishop Y Gizirian.

WESLEY'S CHAPEL, EC2: 9.45 HC, Rev Dr L Griffiths; 11 Harvest Festival.

WESTMINSTER CENTRAL HALL (Methodist): 11 HC, Rev Dr P Graves; 6.30 ES, Mr B Scorer.

ST ANNE AND ST AGNES (Lutheran), EC2: 11 Ch Euch, Rev P D Schmiege; 6.30 EP at St Paul's Cathedral for 'Bridges of Prayer Week'.

ST BARTHOLOMEW THE GREAT, EC1: 9 HC; 11 M, Canterbury Te Deum (Howells); 6.30 Ch Euch, Missa brevis (Kodaly), The Rector.

ST BRIDE'S, EC4: 11 Ch M & Euch, Purcell in C, Canon J Oates.

ST CLEMENT DANES: 11 Ch M, O where shall wisdom be found (Boyce), Rev R Pentland; 12.30 HC.

ST ETHELDREDA'S, Ely Place: 11 S Mass, Missa Papae Marcelli (Palestrina).

ST GEORGE'S, W1: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Haydn).

ST JAMES'S, Piccadilly: 8.30 HC; 11 S Euch, Rev S Cathie; 5.45 EP.

ST JOHN'S, E15: 11 Family Service, Voluntary on Old 100th (Purcell), Rev M Okello; 6.30 HC, Rev D Richards.

ST LUKE'S, SW3: 8 HC; 10.30 MP & HC, Salvator mundi (Blow), Rev D Bean; 6.30 E, Rev C Kevill-Davies.

ST MARK'S, NW1: 8 HC; 9.45 C; 11 S Euch, Missa Brevis in B flat (Mozart), Rev J Chater.

ST MARTIN-IN-THE-FIELDS, WC2: 8 HC; 9.45 Euch; 11.30 Visitors to London Service, Rev C Herbert; 2.45 Chinese Service; 5 Ch E.

ST MARY ABBOTS CHURCH, W8: 8 HC; 9.30 Euch, Rev F Gelli; 11.15 Ch M, Rev P Stubbs; 12.30 HC; 6.30 E, Mrs P Haines.

ST MARY'S, SW1: 9, 10, LM; 11 HM, Missa brevis (Berkeley), Fr N Mercer; 6 Solemn E & Benediction; 7 LM.

ST MARY-THE-VIRGIN, Primrose Hill: 8 HC; 10.30 Euch, Be still my soul (Whitlock), Rev R Mitchell; 6 EP.

ST MARYLEBONE, W1: 8 HC; 11 Ch Euch, Missa Sancti Nicolai (Mussorgsky), Prof J Caldwell.

ST PAUL'S, SW1: 8, 9 HC; 11 Solemn Euch, O bone Jesu (Radcliffe), Rev N Dawson.

ST PETER'S, SW1: 8.15 HC; 10 Euch; 11 S Euch, Os Justi (Bruckner), Fr D B Tillyer.

CHAPEL ROYAL OF ST PETER AD VINCULA, HM Tower of London: 9.15 HC; 11 M, Responses (Radcliffe), Rev P R C Abram.

CHAPEL ROYAL, St James's Palace: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, I was glad (Parry), Canon R Gilbert.

CHAPEL ROYAL, Hampton Court Palace: 8.30 HC; 11 M, Teach me O Lord (Byrd); 3.30 E, Beatus vir (Monteverdi).

QUEEN'S CHAPEL OF THE SAVOY, WC2: 11 M, Ireland in F, Canon M Moxon; 12.30 HC.

THE TEMPLE CHURCH, Fleet Street: 8.30 HC; 11.15 MP, Ireland in F.

GUARDS CHAPEL, Wellington Barracks, SW1: 11 M, O Had I Wings Like to a Dove (Milton), Rev L H Bryan; 12 HC.

ROYAL NAVAL COLLEGE CHAPEL, SE10: 11 S Euch, Sumsion in F, Chaplain.

هكذا من الإصل

Those who are lucky enough to have holes in their fields can demand considerable sums from rubbish contractors to fill them up

On the whole it's a nice little earner

DOWN TO EARTH

PAUL HEINEY

Does anyone, other than the manufacturers of emmental cheese, appreciate the value of holes? I, for one, wish I had more of them. In fact, if the small patch of land I owned were no more than one big hole, I and my bank manager might be the happiest people on earth.

Frustratingly, there was a dip in one of our fields which looked remarkably like a hole when viewed from the right place and in the proper light; but on closer examination it turns out to be an optical illusion and is no more than a dip with a steep side to it. Damn it.

Have no doubt that holes, these days, are valuable commodities. We need holes desperately; otherwise, where are we to put ever-increasing quantities of unrecyclable urban rubbish — if we cannot burn it without worrying ourselves sick about producing greenhouse gases? The answer is that we have to put it down deep holes. It is certainly no total solution, as some have discovered when housing estates have been built on what turn out to be explosive, methane-saturated foundations. But the filling of holes in fields with non-polluting rubbish, which is then covered with a moderate depth of topsoil and cultivated, seems less of a crime than some alternatives. I understand from those who are blessed with land as pitted as the surface of Mars that they can demand considerable sums of money from rubbish contractors and have their land levelled and made more useful for cultivation at the same time. There are planning considerations, of course, but on the whole it is a nice little earner.

Making money out of holes is no new phenomenon in the part of coastal Suffolk where we live, which is not far from the rivers Alde and Deben. Those who have read Arthur Ransome will have no difficulty visualising these tidal waters with their wide, muddy foreshores and swampy reed beds. The bitterns, osytercatchers and shelduck are among the principal residents; and on grey, winter days when the tourists and weekenders have long since fled the cold east wind from Siberia, you might as well be on the edge of the world.

And between these two rivers is an area of land where, a century ago, holes equalled prosperity. I am most grateful to the newsletter of the River Alde and Ore Association which describes the "Suffolk Gold Rush" which ended a century ago.

The gold was in the form of coprolite, a fertiliser rich in phosphates, which occurred only in this confined area of England thanks to peculiar geological circumstances. The fertiliser itself consisted of marine excreta and bones, together with shells and some sand which, when originally laid down, were on the seabed. Shifts in the earth's crust turned the seabed into dry land and the coprolite bed, only two feet thick, could be found not far below the surface.

All you had to do was dig a hole. And they did. Digging coprolite could double a farm worker's wages. At the height of the boom, it could be sold for two shillings a ton and an acre could produce 300 tons. As John Waddell, the newsletter editor, points out: "It is possible to picture the excitement it caused; imagine digging up the price of your cottage in your vegetable patch."

And imagine, too, the joy felt by farmers on discovering, for the first time, the value of this stuff. Not only did it earn a fortune for the lucky few who had it hidden beneath their land, but its fertilising properties brought prosperity to farming customers, too. The distinguished agricultural observer Arthur Young travelled through East Anglia in 1771 and wrote: "It undoubtedly enriches the soil, for the farmers here lay on ten to 12 cartloads an acre and the effect is amazingly great. The soil is ever after greatly the better for it. The effects are so great that, on breaking the poor heaths of this county, they have had exceedingly fine crops from such parts as they manured, while other parts unmanured have scarcely yielded the seed again."

It is arguable, of course, that this is where the agricultural rot set in, for as soon as farmers were able to boost production beyond previously imaginable levels, it was inevitable that they would develop a taste for it and demand even greater yields, which science would eventually deliver. It was indeed agricultural science which did for the Suffolk Gold Rush 100 years ago, as new methods of phosphate production were developed in the United States and the cheaper stuff was brought by ship to Ipswich docks.

It is sad to think the good work of the fish, molluscs and sea creatures of hundreds of thousands of years cannot be replicated. The residues we lay down for future generations to extract from the earth when the oil, gas and coal have run out seem inadequate by comparison. Just across the lane, my neighbour was lucky enough to have a big hole that needed filling. Over the years I have seen what goes in there. I doubt there is much fertilising potential in washing machines.

Readers' letters are welcome on countryside matters, of all kinds. Address them to: Paul Heiney, Weekend, The Times, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. They are published on the first Saturday of the month.

Men with water on the brain

Looking irrigated: Naish with a farm pump

Farmers are building their own reservoirs to survive in parched Britain, says **Sally Smith**

MICHAEL POWELL

Andrew Naish's family farm depends on accurate use of reservoir water to ensure its potato crop is suitable for turning into crisps and chips

He went to see the pyramids and the Sphinx — but it was the effect of a "dirty brown slick of water" that impressed Allan Stevenson on his holiday. "There was this mighty irrigation system making the desert flower, as it has done for thousands of years," he says. "Every bit as much of an achievement as the pyramids."

He has a close affinity with the farmers along the Nile. At home in Essex he is dealing with the distribution of millions of gallons of water to his own crops. He is one of the drought-stricken British farmers who are having to learn the science of water storage and management with as much concentration as any Middle Eastern grower.

Drought in recent years, along with the need to provide water in precise amounts, has prompted a scramble to build farm reservoirs.

The Ministry of Agriculture listed 3,220 farm reservoirs in 1995, and since then construction has accelerated, dotting the countryside with squares, rectangles and ovals of water. Robert Orford, of G. Miles and Sons at Bury St Edmunds, is building a dozen farm reservoirs this year. They hold 15-20 million gallons each and cost from £30,000 to more than £80,000.

The work is by no means confined to the great arable areas of the eastern counties. Mr Orford says that farmers across the Midlands and into Gloucestershire and the Welsh border counties, where rainfall is much higher, are also investing in water. Taking it from rivers and streams or boreholes sunk deep into aquifers requires a licence from the Environment Agency, which is responsible for water resources.

Though they must have a licence and pay for it, farmers have no right to unlimited water. When supplies run short they face restrictions and can be ordered to stop irrigating. Their best solution, encouraged by the Agency, is to ensure supplies by pumping water into reservoirs during winter. There is no grant aid for building reservoirs, but winter water costs a tenth of the summer price.

Water is not needed just to create bumper crops, it is essential to provide quality produce. Mr Stevenson and his three brothers, who farm 1,300 acres at High Roding, near Chelmsford, aim to grow top-quality spuds for baking. For this market, smooth, blemish-free skins are obligatory. If these potatoes do not have sufficient water, particularly when they are young, they develop a skin disease known as scab, in appearance as unfortunate as it sounds. Though harmless, scab can slash the crop price from £140 a tonne to as little as £25.

Even in September, when the potatoes are ready for harvesting, those delicate skins have to be protected and water is poured on to dry soil to soften it before digging.

The brothers are just completing their fourth reservoir, which will bring their storage capacity to well over 21 million gallons, linked by three miles of underground pipes to central points in every field.

Beside the River Meden at Budby in Nottinghamshire, the Naish family has recently completed a second reservoir, which will bring their storage capacity to 70 million gallons.

David Naish is president of the National Farmers Union, his son Andrew runs the farm. Their potatoes go to be made into crisps and chips, and correct watering is crucial to ensuring they do not grow in fits and starts.

"If they dry out and then get a deluge of rain they split, and the processors do not want them," Andrew explains.

Steady growth in carrots is yet more important: "If we are going to get the best prices, we have to supply the regular size and shape that shoppers want," he says. "Skin finish is vital and depends on consistent water. Carrots need enormous quantities."

They are by no means the only vegetables to suffer. Beans become dry and woody and lose their colour; swedes and parsnips get coarse.

The science of water management is as important as having it available, and there has to be constant monitoring. Too much can be as bad as too little; plants need it to take up nutrients, but it can also wash them away.

Mr Stevenson has three systems to monitor moisture in the earth. Probes read the soil at different levels. This is backed up by complicated calculations using information from the Meteorological Office, involving wind, humidity and the size and maturity of the crop.

"Then," he says, "just to make sure, I go out with the trowel." One of the four brothers will be out checking or moving the great rigs that supply the water day and night. Essex may not resemble the Nile Valley, but the ancient farming skills are the same.

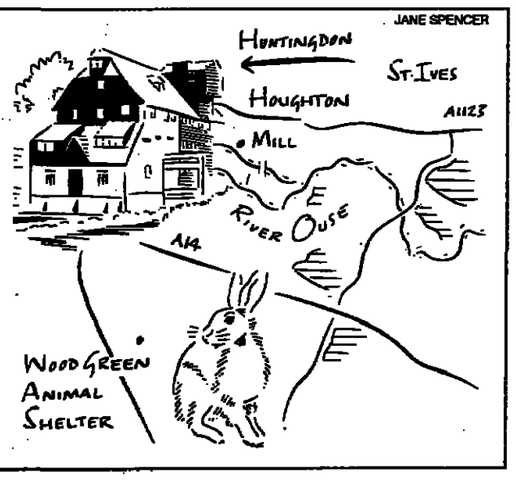
ON THE SPOT: HOUGHTON MILL

Rural recommendations

The place: the bridge at Houghton Mill, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire.
The view: boats navigating the Great Ouse, acres of flat, water meadowland and the impressive five-storey watermill.
Appeal: an accessible, peaceful spot.
Aficionados: anglers, walkers and boating enthusiasts.
Historical interest: the mill was valued at 20 shillings in the 1086 Domesday survey and in the 12th century villagers were encouraged to grind their corn there or face heavy fines. In 1822, the philanthropist Potto Brown took over. Today, much of the machinery is in working order.
Time to visit: this weekend, 2-5.30pm, or after Easter.
How to get there: follow signs from the A1123 southeast of Huntingdon.
OS reference: 283/719 on sheet 153.
Also nearby: riverside walks, boat hire and Houghton village. Wood Green animal shelter is five miles south.

DEBORAH KING

JANE SPENCER



Malcolm Smith on a new view of Britain's most successful predator

Despite all our efforts, Reynard is here to stay

Mention foxes and fox hunting and emotions run high. So it is refreshing to read a new report, *Foxes and Forestry* by Andrew Chadwick, Simon Hodge and Philip Ratcliffe of the Forestry Commission, which presents an objective review of the fox, its ecology, reproduction, economic impact and methods of "controlling" it. The role of commercial forestry in bolstering fox populations is discussed and so, too, is the impact of foxes on lambs and poultry. The report offers an explanation for why some farmers suffer high lamb kills. And it dismisses any notion that fox populations can ever be significantly reduced.

The red fox is widespread in Britain except on many of the Scottish islands. In urban areas their home range is often no more than four hectares. In upland areas where food can be scarce, a fox may range over a few thousand hectares. On lowland farms, 200 or 300 hectares are the norm.

Bounties have been paid for dead foxes since the 16th century in England and Wales, since 1457 in Scotland. But "they have not achieved any long-term reduction in fox numbers", concludes the review. Foxes are increasing in numbers because of more pheasant rearing, higher rabbit populations and the foxes' liking for urban areas.

If hunting and snaring do not work, what does? "They may be limited by food, by suitable den sites and shelter, by disease and human kills, by their territorial behaviour, or by a combination of all four," says Hodge. "In the uplands, food supply might limit numbers, in the lowlands it could be food, territorial behaviour and road kills."

"On the island of Mull, where there are no foxes," says the report, "production of lambs over a three-year period was no better than on similar ground on the mainland (where there are foxes). This suggests that predation by foxes was *part of*, rather than in addition to, the normal scale of lamb losses."

"Ewes in good condition protect their lambs from foxes best," says Dr Raymond Hewson, an expert on fox predation and livestock. "Ewes kept out all winter suffer higher lamb mortality in the spring, perhaps because they are in poorer condition." This explains why adjacent farmers with differing management practices are likely to suffer different rates of loss.

For farmers suffering heavy lamb losses, the report suggests a targeted control to kill the individual foxes responsible. Specific foxes can develop a predilection for lambs or poultry. Killing the offending fox at the breeding den is the most successful way because lamb killing is often associated with foxes feeding their cubs. The authors review all methods of killing and conclude that using a rifle with spotlights at night (to mesmerise the animals) is the most "selective, quick and humane" method, a view endorsed by John Bryant, Chief Executive of the League Against Cruel Sports.

ARDEA

Fox numbers are growing, thanks to good food supplies

PETER BROWN

Yellowhammer: starting to flock

High-flyers take their winter break

FEATHER REPORT

IN THE low autumn sunshine last weekend I visited one of my favourite stretches of hill country — rolling chalk hills open to the sky, now mostly farmlamd, but dotted here and there with small woods and copses. The only birds singing were robins in the woods, but after the quiet days of August and September there seemed to be plenty of other birds about again.

Rooks were all over the fields, cawing, flying up and down, far more restless than the little parties of wood pigeons that were gobbling away steadily at the edges of the fields. This is the easiest time of the year, incidentally, to distinguish rooks from crows at a glance, since the bare white patch at the base of the rook's beak is large and conspicuous.

I soon noticed that there were sounds, rather like the trickling of water, coming from the hawthorn hedges and some of the solitary oaks. This is a call particularly used by yellowhammers when they are starting to flock in the autumn. Sure enough, a moment later one flew out of a tree, its yellow flanks and long tail very striking as it looped away from me, and after that inital encounter I kept on seeing them.

SKYLARKS have stopped singing for the time being, but every so often one went up from the earth with a lilting call, and landed again further off.

When skylarks fly, they seem to be extraordinarily lightweight birds, drifting gently slightly from side to side as if they were being blown about by the wind. But when they land and run through the barley shoots, they look very sturdy, almost like small, crested game birds.

A few meadow pipits, doubtless on migration, went up with thin, piping calls from a field, and then I heard a loud whooping cry from a distant hedge of oaks, blackthorns and wild roses. I whipped my field glasses on to the hedge and was rewarded by the sight of a little owl sitting on a fence post. Its eyes were big and bright but its face seemed to be fixed in a scowl. Perhaps it saw the sunlight flash on the lenses of my binoculars — a regular hazard for birdwatchers — and it rose quickly on its soft, rounded wings and dived over the hedge.

All the other birds of the day were finches. Linnets went over, casually throwing out a single phrase of song, then falling back into a lazy twitter. Greenfinches were making a harsher rattle in the treetops. There was one sudden outburst of liquid, silvery twitters overhead, like the aural equivalent of a shower of sunlight, and I looked up just in time to see a flock of green siskins whirling away towards a spruce plantation.

The siskins are winter visitors to the South of England — and next time I go I expect I shall find the winter thrushes, the redwings and fieldfares, back from Scandinavia.

DERWENT MAY

● **What's about:** *Birders — look out for storm-blown grey phalaropes, kittiwakes and skuas on inland waters.*
Twitchers — look out for a black-throated thrush in Fetlar, Shetland, a pallas's warbler at Sumburgh Head, Shetland and a Baird's sandpiper at Cantley, Norfolk. Details from Birdline, 0891 700222. Calls cost 50p a minute

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Absorbing the legacy of Mandela

Peter Taylor encounters many surprises in the new South Africa as he travels through the less well-known Eastern Cape

PETER NICHOLLS

The Shamwari game reserve, winner of conservation awards, employs a private anti-poaching squad which has managed to keep its black and white rhino safe from attack

It is not every day that you are obliged to stand up for a national anthem in the middle of the main course, but then Graaff-Reinet, nestling in the arid wilderness of the Great Karoo, South Africa's most spectacular expanse of semi-desert, does have a reputation for eccentricity.

The meal at the Drostdy Hotel (where guests occupy separate houses which once belonged to manumitted slaves) had been going splendidly. We were on the Karoo lamb when the impi of enormous waitresses, dressed in black smocks and frilly white aprons, decided to sing. Before we knew it, they had launched — and I do mean launched, as they collectively resembled a hovercraft with rhythm — into *Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrica* (God Bless Africa). We shuffled sheepishly to our feet.

Our group of four had decided to sample three of the region's attractions — like greedily dipping into a smorgasbord — in the space of a week. We would look at game (in a malaria-free park), drive through the Karoo (literally "Land of Thirst"), and finally unwind on the empty shores of the Wild Coast.

The new South Africa is even more full of surprises than the old, and a traveller through the Eastern Cape encounters plenty. The Western Cape, especially the famous Garden Route from Cape Town to Plettenberg Bay, is better known by most tourists, but the Eastern Cape — from the forests of Tsitsikamma in the south, through Port Elizabeth to the borders of KwaZulu/Natal in the north — provides in the eyes of many visitors a more accurate vignette of the country.

It was here, after all, that Boer, Xhosa and Briton struggled for ascendancy in the 19th century, and here, in the 20th, that apartheid carved out two black "homelands": Transkei and Ciskei. Not surprisingly, the Eastern Cape became a focal point for black resistance (until 1960 the only university open to blacks was at Fort Hare), and among the region's sons was one Rolihlahla Mandela, who, on arriving at primary school near Umtata, was given by his teacher the Christian name "Nelson".

In his autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom*, Mandela describes his home region as "a beautiful country of rolling hills, fertile valleys, and a thousand rivers and streams". Flying into Port Elizabeth from Johannesburg, you can see what he means. The rounded, humpback topography looks from the air like an army of giants praying to Mecca.

Port Elizabeth, named after the wife of a former British governor, is the springboard for the region. It is an agreeable, unfussy little city with a well-kept secret in Hackklewood House, a private residence lovingly converted into a hotel. The size of the Victorian bathrooms would make a maharajah blush.

The wide open spaces that most visitors come for, however, begin an hour up the road at Shamwari game reserve. Roughly 30 miles long by eight wide, Shamwari has won conservation awards, and boasts a wildlife research team as well as an anti-poaching team to deter the most dangerous predator of all. So far, its precious rhino have proved safe from attack.

We arrived at the lodge just in time for the night game drive, when a bird uncharitably called the Spotted Dickhead lived up to its name by hogging the headlights and refusing to get out of the way.

What I particularly like about these drives is the amount of useless but riveting information provided by the rangers. An elephant, for example, eats for 18 hours a day, consuming up to 250kgs of vegetation and depositing 100kgs of dung. One of our number who kept similar eating hours remarked, as we bounced along pitted tracks, that he regarded the herds of deer as a live menu. He had a point, for the kudu steak at the evening barbecue was excellent.

Dozing next morning in a metal four-poster of Heath-Robinson design, I was wakened before dawn by an avian cacophony. One bird, which croaked "Psst! Psst!", I dubbed the Gossip Bird. Another, which appeared to cry "Move the resolution" became the Trade Union Bird. In vain I listened for the Spotted Dickhead, but the only sound resembling it — a metronomic squawk — turned out to be someone's alarm clock.

Driving through the Karoo towards Graaff-Reinet, the road climbs through a couple of thousand feet. The town itself, founded in 1786, is the fourth oldest in South Africa, and a Victorian-era notice in the Drostdy Hotel proclaims: "Invalids and pleasure seekers will find Graaff-Reinet one of the most healthy and pleasantly situated towns in the colony."

More than 200 of its buildings are listed as national monuments, most having whitewashed walls and exterior woodwork painted in a mandatory shade of "Graaff-Reinet green". The determination to keep the traditional colour scheme is a trifle obsessional ("Not much green here," said a black friend laconically, gesturing to shanties on the edge of town), but this is a place that understands rules.

Anticipating Hillary Clinton by more than 100 years, the town banned smoking in the street in the 19th century — to prevent thatched roofs from catching fire. And when the first woman to be hanged in South Africa, a prostitute who had murdered her lover, met her end there in 1842, officials carefully tied her petticoat to her ankles so that her underwear was not revealed as she swung from the gallows.

One likes to think of her wearing Graaff-Reinet green knickers.

Yet, along with the sense of conformity and the power of the kirk (the British sent out Scottish ministers to try to Presbyterianise the Calvinists), the town has always known how to let its hair down. Illegal white brandy was produced for years, with people burning tyres in their back gardens to put police off the scent.

In the space of 24 hours we drove to the nearby village of Nieu-Bethesda to look at an exhibition of psychedelic owl sculptures in concrete and glass; attended a gossipy dinner party, whose glamorous hostess turned out to be the girlfriend of a former state president; and watched in amazement as a late-night drinker at the Drostdy performed his party trick of jumping on to a 4ft bar from a standing position. Then he did it backwards.

Just outside the town is the twin spectacle that no one who visits Graaff-Reinet can miss: the perfectly symmetrical Spandau Kop, a huge outcrop towering above the plain like the nose cone of a ballistic missile; and, beside it, the Valley of Desolation, crumbling columns of weather-blasted dolomite, resembling the Gothic ruins of an extinct civilisation.

One feels an intruder in landscapes such as these, for the place belongs to those creatures who lurk amid the boulders and to the black eagles, which swoop and wheel exultantly at sunset. Later, I discovered from Peter Muller-Brunke, one of South Africa's pioneer microlight aviators, that tourists, too, can fly with the eagles in the Valley of Desolation.

As things worked out, we were to have thrills in the sky ourselves. Sending the baggage on a seven-hour road journey, we chartered a six-seater for the 90-minute flight to Port St Johns on the aptly named Wild Coast. Beneath us, saw-edged escarpments gave way to gentler contours and hill villages of the sort Mandela must have been raised in: then beneath our bobbing little pod was the Indian Ocean, foaming in a white frenzy as it reached the uncompromising shores of Africa.

The landing at Port St Johns is hairy as the unmarked airstrip perches on the edge of sheer cliffs plunging 1,200ft to the river below. Before taking off again, the insouciant pilot asked us to shoo away a cow that had wandered on to the strip.

When a couple of cars from our hotel arrived to take us to Umngazi River Bungalows I volunteered to drive, and spent the next 40 minutes delicately circumnavigating potholes. Our destination, however, tucked into the sandy estuary of the Umngazi River, was worth any amount of trouble. Beside the terraces of the thatched cottages (each with a rather erotic open-air shower), the river flowed into the ocean, the gigantic, ever-pounding surf as insistent as a distant motorway. A sign at the entrance to Umngazi reads: "Kick your shoes off, relax", and indeed, the place is laid-back to the point of being horizontal.

At sunset we collected some booze and cruised up the lazy river. A lofty, nonchalant fish eagle observed our passage as kamikaze kingfishers plummeted for their prey on either side. Yard-long iguanas nuzzled each other on a rock, and by the reedy bank a local man was landing a huge silver granta. We applauded, and he bowed. During a three-hour walk along the beach the following morning we didn't encounter more than half a dozen other visitors.

The seven-hour haul by road back to Port Elizabeth is a reminder of South Africa's vastness. Being driven through the chaotic town of Umtata, with pavement vendors spilling into the main road, I wondered whether plans for a museum at the nearby village of Qunu, where Mandela spent his childhood years, would ever come to fruition. Probably not, but memorials are often a disappointment. The recently unveiled statue at East London to "black consciousness" leader Steve Biko is a miserable effort, disliked by locals and seemingly erected for the aggrandisement of white philanthropists.

Pathetic, I thought, and yawned. What will Mandela's monument be? His legacy, I suppose, is new South Africa itself. As villages drifted by, I began to wonder whether any outsider could ever really know this beguiling, sometimes worrying country. The African road rolled on, the late afternoon sun beating fiercely through the windows. Soon, I was fast asleep.

EASTERN CAPE FACT FILE

■ Peter Taylor travelled with Eastern Cape Tourism (01473 225652, fax 01473 226199), which can provide information about Hacklewood House, Port Elizabeth, Shamwari Game Reserve, the Drostdy Hotel, Graaff-Reinet and Umngazi River Bungalows. For example, a week at Shamwari or Umngazi River Bungalows (or a week divided between the two) costs around £800-£1,000 per person (including return air fares from London) in low season, April to September, and around £1,400-£1,800 per person in high season, October to March. Southern Africa Travel (0171-630 0100), which specialises in the Eastern Cape, can also arrange itineraries.

■ Peter Taylor flew with Virgin Atlantic (01293 747747), which has daily services from Heathrow to Johannesburg from £448, and connects with Sun Air, Comair, and South African Airways for Port Elizabeth and East London.

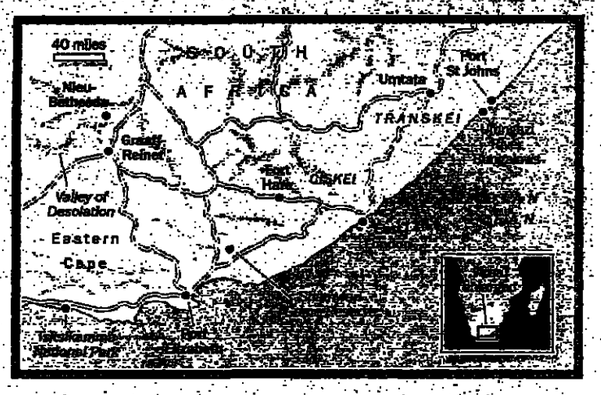
■ Wings Over Africa provides charter light aircraft in the Eastern Cape, based in Graaff-Reinet (00 27 491 91 0027) or via Eastern Cape Tourism.

Lions and their cubs can be seen at Shamwari game park

■ No visas are required for South Africa for British passport holders. The Eastern Cape is a malaria-free area. In most hotels, lodges and resorts the dress code is casual by day (shorts, T-shirts) and "smart casual" at night (trousers, open-neck shirt). In winter, March to September, take something warm for evening wear, especially for game drives.

Sensible security precautions should be taken with regard to personal belongings. It is inadvisable to drive on rural roads after dark as animals often travel on them by night.

■ Reading: Nelson Mandela's autobiography, *Long Walk to Freedom* (Little, Brown, £20). For the viewpoint of an anguished white liberal, try *My Traitor's Heart* by Rian Malan (Vintage, 7.99). For people who take their bird-watching seriously, *Newman's Birds of Southern Africa*, which is published in South Africa by Southern Book Publishers, is indispensible. *South Africa, Lesotho and Swaziland* (Lonely Planet, £11.95, with a new edition out next month at £13.99).



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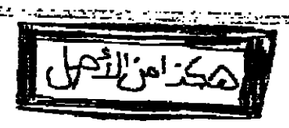


INDIA: TRAIL OF ENLIGHTENMENT

Walking in the footprints of Buddha

Louise Nicholson went on a pilgrimage to the eastern state of Bihar

If you go west from Delhi you find Rajasthan, a state full of picturesque forts and palace-hotels packaged and marketed for the comfort-seeking Western tourist. If you go east you find Bihar, a state of great beauty and history that attracts more Koreans and Japanese than Europeans.

Bihar is India's ninth biggest state, yet its second most populous: more than 86 million people — the majority living in medieval farming villages — are crammed into a lush landscape that stretches from the Himalayan foothills down to the forests of Orissa.

Despite being liberally watered by the great Ganges river, Bihar is poor and lags decades behind India's booming economy. The average income is about £40 a year. The caste system is fiercely rigid, society is feudal, political awareness is high and gang warfare is rampant. But it is not the picturesque feudalism that attracts so many tourists from east Asia. It is Buddha. They have long paid highly to follow the Buddhist trail, which wins serious street-cred back home.

I had come to Bihar for Buddha, too, travelling with Shantum Seth, a lay Buddhist monk who mixes working for the United Nations in Delhi with leading trips to places associated with Buddha's life. We were off on a mini-Buddhist trail — Budhgaya, Rajgir and Nalanda. Our flight to Patna, Bihar's capital, was through clear November skies with views of the snowcapped Himalayas, where Buddha was born in around 563 BC at Lumbini, now in Nepal. Below flowed the bountiful Ganges.

Patna, strung out along the river's banks, was a surprise. The handsome avenues and grand façades built as New Patna for British bureaucrats in the 1920s reminded me of Lutyens's New Delhi imperialism. And its authority. For neither here nor in the bustling old city, nor down by the silent quays and river steps that for centuries hummed with trade, were there any of the usual wandering cows. Apparently, the government had decreed that all cows must be kept off the streets that day — and, unbelievably, they were, although I was glad to see them back on the streets the next morning.

More importantly, where were the hints of Patilaputra? This was the great city that flourished here during Buddha's lifetime and which the Greek envoy, Megasthenes, described in the 3rd century BC as having 64 gates in its bastioned walls and palace pillars "clasped around with vines embossed in gold and ornamented with designs of birds and foliage in gold and silver". Only a chariot wheel and pillar remained, displayed in the museum with quantities of sublime stone sculptures, material proof of Patna's vanished greatness. Clearly, Buddha's footprints were not to be found here. Not a sign of an East Asian tourist, either. Doubtless, they were diligently doing the full trail, much of it in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh — Sravasti (where Buddha spent 24 rainy seasons), Lumbini (his birthplace), Kushinagar (where he died) and Sarnath (the site of Buddha's first sermon after enlightenment).

We set off for Bodhgaya in an unreliable-looking car that was the best Patna could manage. Trundling down lanes built as high causeways between glowing paddy fields, Shantum began talking about Buddhism while I listened and gazed out at huge isolated banyan trees drooping their lateral roots, at villages of mud huts decorated with rice-flour paintings, and at a saffron-turbaned man driving his veiled daughter to her wedding on his bullock cart.

We muddled through various traffic jams. One was caused by six elephants on their way to be sold at the Elephant Fair at Sonepur. Another was for a festooned truck parading a local Hindu goddess accompanied by musicians belting out a hip Hindi beat for the village dancers. Another was a roadblock because a village girl had been run over; since she came from the Chief Minister's clan there were likely to be reprisals.

As darkness fell, the town of Gaya was a crush of people, like a medieval fair. Steaming cauldrons infused the air with spiciness. In cupboard-like shops lit by oil lamps sat moneylenders and tobacco sellers. Only the jewellers and sweetmeat shops dazzled with electric light.

Bodhgaya lay just beyond, silent and dark. We shared our lodgings with a coachload of Taiwanese who ate dinner and then got down to some chanting, complete with loudhailer.

At sunrise the next morning, the Mahabodhi temple complex was already busy. Railings were decorated with brightly coloured bunting and flags, the Sri Lankan ones like crochet, the Nepalese ones printed with Buddha's words. The atmosphere was cosmopolitan, almost celebratory and yet intensely peaceful.

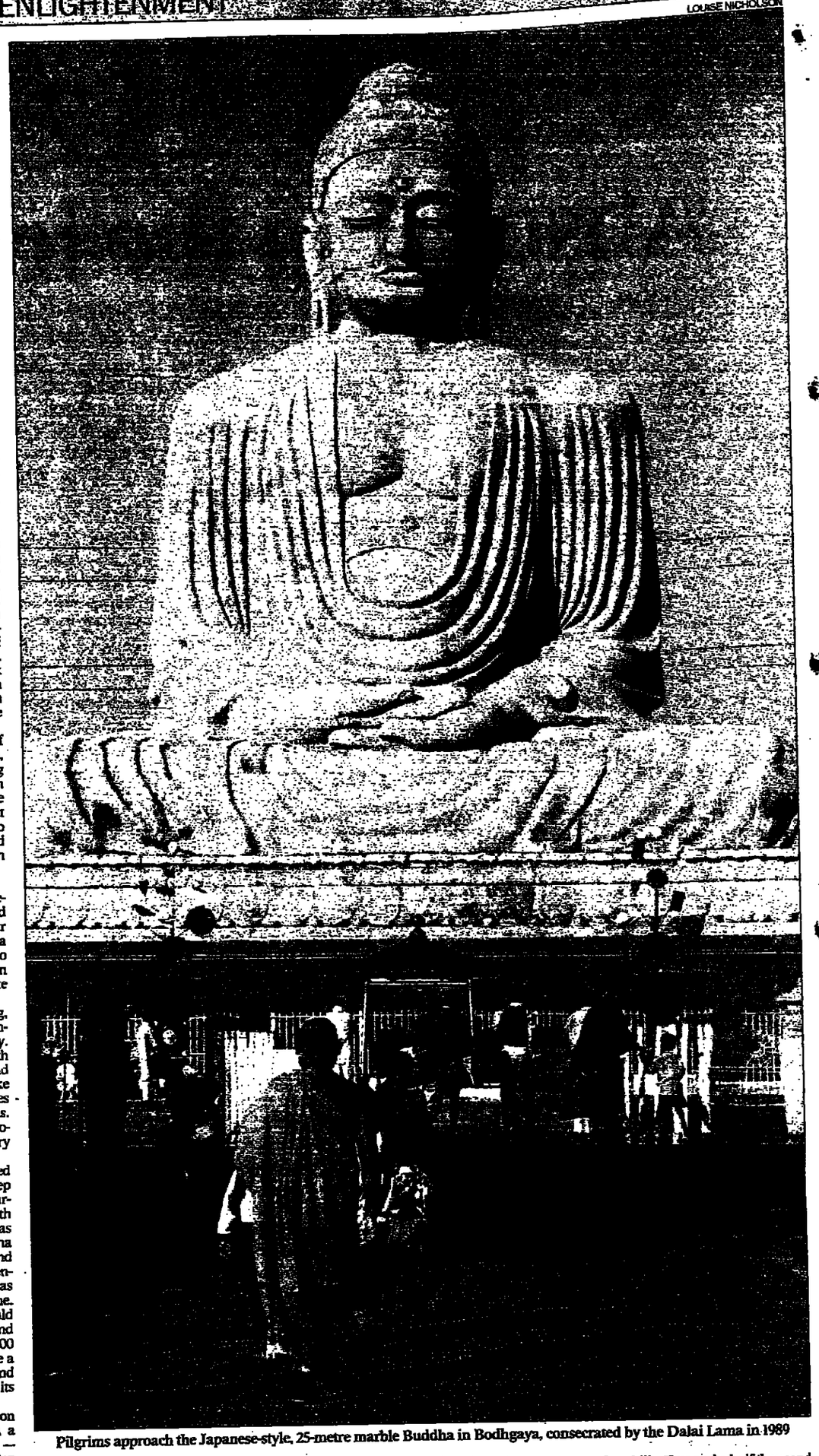
Huddles of monks swathed in saffron, yellow and deep burgundy cloth sat murmuring and meditating beneath the sacred pipal tree. It was here that Prince Siddhartha meditated all night long and achieved "bodhi", enlightenment. Henceforward he was Buddha, the Awakened One. The great religion would spread throughout India and beyond and thrive for 1,000 years, until Hinduism made a new bid for popularity and even adopted Buddha into its vast pantheon of gods.

Today, India's five million Buddhists — a handful in a population of a billion — include Neo-Buddhists. Often poor farmers from Madhya Pradesh in central India, they are inspired by the Buddhist convert Dr B.R. Ambedka, who rose from untouchable status to sitting on the committee which devised India's constitution. A few were here, looking defiant, perhaps unhappy about the Hindu temple built here some centuries ago over one of their most sacred sites. They did not join the Eastern pilgrims trotting round Bodhgaya's string of newly built Chinese, Vietnamese, Tibetan and Thai temples, funded by these countries. Nor did they visit the 25-metre-tall, Japanese-style marble Buddha consecrated by the Dalai Lama in 1989. And the museum of glorious Buddhist stone carvings was left for me alone.

I picked up a few miniholograms of Buddha, essential pilgrim shopping, and we sped on to Rajgir. During the rainy seasons, Buddha would return here from his tours as the leading spiritual teacher of the day. Later, the nearby University of Nalanda rose to be the finest in the east. Its remarkable remains, set around a great beehive-shaped stupa, were much more impressive than the Buddha-associated spots in Rajgir. This time the museum did have visitors, but its rules forbade weapons, daggers, singing and megaphones.

As the sun lowered we climbed Rajgir's Gridhrakuta Hill to reach Vulture's Seat, a high terrace that looked westwards over the thickly wooded hills. Two and a half thousand years ago Buddha would come here; today we were alone. Shantum gave flowers to the little shrine, lit a candle and we sat on meditation cushions made by Best Tailors of Bodhgaya. High above the silent and empty landscape, I breathed in, breathed out, emptied my mind and felt remarkably refreshed.

LOUISE NICHOLSON



Pilgrims approach the Japanese-style, 25-metre marble Buddha in Bodhgaya, consecrated by the Dalai Lama in 1989

NEW BOOKS ON INDIA

TWO travel books on India have been published this week. Derry Moore's moody, reflective black-and-white photographs in *Evening Ragas* (John Murray, £20) show an India in decay, marooned between its feudal past and its dynamic present. Moore captures what he calls the "cultural osmosis" between European and Indian architecture in the dark days before mass tourism.

The mansions and interiors of Calcutta in his images — and those of Hyderabad, Lucknow and other cities — have changed little since his first visit in 1976; those I have seen recently are still frozen in time. As he puts it: "The Bengal climate, the enemy of plasterwork, paint and bricks, having been allowed to perform its work of destruction relatively unmolested, now seemed to pause and leave the buildings supported by their own decay."

George Michell takes a different view of tourism in the first edition of the *Blue Guide to Southern India* (A & C Black, £16.99). An indefatigable traveller and optimist, he had poured years of devoted study of India's architecture into this guide. He calls the 400 places he writes about "a banquet" of the familiar and unfamiliar, yet modestly he makes "no claim to completeness".

Michell organises his guide as a series of bases from which to explore. One is the temple town of Tiruchirapalli, from which he suggests six mouthwatering expeditions. I've visited Srinivasanallur's Chola temple, but the carvings on Avudaiyarkoil's temple are something to look forward to.

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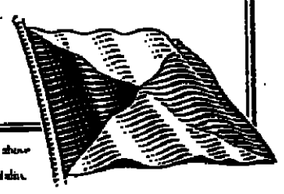

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FACT FILE

In Buddha's footprints

■ Louise Nicholson travelled to India with Worldwide Journeys & Expeditions (0171-381 8638), which can tailor-make trips throughout India. For example, a two-week tour, November 10-24, visiting the Sonepur Elephant Fair near Patna, Varanasi, Khajuraho, Gwalior, Agra and Delhi, costs from £1,895 per person based on two sharing, including flights, internal transport, a private guide and driver, and room-only accommodation.

■ To join one of Shantum Seth's buddhist journeys, contact Vivien Bell (01730 812362). The next "Pilgrimages in the Footsteps of the Buddha — through India and Nepal" are from December 20 to January 3 (approx cost £2,220), and January 10-29 (approx £2,510). Pilgrimages begin and end in Delhi. The price includes escort, transport, food and lodging but excludes international air fare, visa and insurance.

■ *Louise Nicholson's India Companion* is published by Headline (£14.99). The author leads tours to India and is a consultant for private visits (0171-359 5250).

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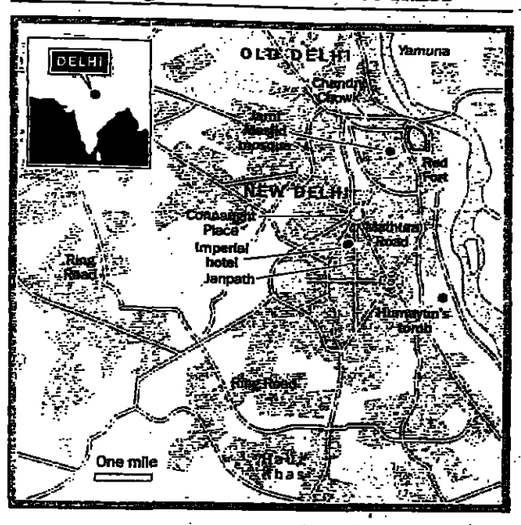
INDIA: DISCOVERING THE CAPITAL

A day in the life of Delhi

Adam Hopkins hired a car, a driver and a guide to show him the sights most visitors miss



MECKY FÖGELING

"We had found time for a rickshaw ride through the otherwise impenetrable Chandni Chowk, passing through its tiny alleys where sacred cows wandered among market stalls"

Having a day off in Delhi, a city I already knew quite well, I decided I would do the town in style and organised a car, a driver and a guide. Just for myself.

The inspiration was not so much Tamburlaine the Great or the Mogul emperor Shah Jahan — of Taj Mahal fame — both of whom had made a big impression here, but an expat friend who gave a birthday party and hired an elephant to stand outside his door in place of the usual balloons.

Given the comparative wealth of India's capital city and the great, wide spaces of New Delhi in particular — imperial handiwork of British architects Lutyens and Baker — you do not feel so oppressed by poverty as in other parts of the sub-continent.

And so the car. It was booked for 8.30am. Already, from my perch on the 15th floor of the not-altogether-to-be-recommended Hotel Kanishka, full of Russians swaying slightly and giving off a whiff of vodka, I had watched the dawn come up over a swath of New Delhi.

Well beneath my window, black kites and crows were flying over the enormous floral roundabouts. Early vehicles headed straight for the same spot as one another, the first arrival cutting directly across the other's path and so provoking, even in near-empty streets, the kind of water-boatman darts and sallies that characterise local traffic at the height of day.

The sun began to shine through the quotidian smog, casting faint rays on the domes of Herbert Baker's huge Secretariat buildings.

At 8.05, when I was in the shower — this being India, where service to tourists is sometimes super-punctilious — the driver announced his arrival. By 8.30 I was in the lobby with Shivani Seth, sari-clad city guide. We started with a planning session. The oldest bits of Delhi are up in the north and down in the deepest south of the city, while New Delhi itself is more or less smack in the middle. Where to start, then, to get the best historical sequence?

The problem arises because just about every early ruler simply started up somewhere in the general vicinity, depending on scenery or soothsayers, producing a new city of his own. There are seven or eight early versions of Delhi in the south, some so far out as to offer a glimpse of Indian countryside, with bullocks, water buffaloes and women washing clothes in water tanks.

These outer cities include a number of evocative heaps of stone and the magnificent Qutab Minar, a minaret crawling with Koranic script and ringed with elegant balconies. It stands next to the first mosque in India, built in imperial triumphalism from the looted remnants of 27 Hindu temples. Definitely on the priority list.

However, way up north stands the Mogul version — so-called Old Delhi itself, as compact and crowded as New Delhi is open, with the famous Red Fort built by Shah Jahan. "Let's begin with the Red Fort," says Shivani. "It gets so crowded as the sun gets higher."

I remembered it well enough when we arrived, the enormous outer walls in fierce red sandstone, the barrack buildings put up inside by the British after the Indian mutiny, the 17th-century Hall of Public Audience, with its multi-lobed arches and open spaces forested with pillars. Looking over the former course of the Yamuna River, now a sandy plain with a Sunday morning flea-market, is the harem and the imperial residence, long since stripped of any article of value.

Without Shivani, however, I would never have spotted the image of Orpheus inlaid in stone on a decorative wall in the Hall of Public Audience — this in a Muslim building — nor learnt the names of the trees in the fort enclosure, pipal and ashok and neem, nor heard about the many uses of the neem tree in Ayurvedic medicine.

Nor, indeed, without reference to the multitudinous snake charmers, would I have heard how the government has banned a drug made from the poison of cobras. In India there is always a vast amount going on — all of it fascinating — but you never hear a tenth of it unless you travel with a friend or a good guide.

So began a hectic but enthralling tour of monuments, from the (Mogul) Jami Masjid mosque, to the (Mogul) tomb of Humayun — with turban-like dome and energetic patterning in red and white — and passing among the ceremonial (British) buildings of New Delhi until finally we arrived, as light was dimming, at the Qutab Minar. Here half the populace, mainly in family groups, seemed to be taking an evening stroll.

On the way we had found time for a cycle rickshaw ride through otherwise impenetrable Chandni Chowk, passing through its tiny alleys where sacred cows wandered among market vegetables, munching the occasional pile of reject mangetouts. Shivani said: "You do realise that most tourists spend only one day in Delhi, on their way to Agra or the forts of Rajasthan, and usually devote half of that to shopping?" So along the way we stitched in shopping, too.

I had made a start myself in Janpath, the great cheapo emporium of New Delhi, where open-fronted shops display the handicrafts of all India. Here there are Kashmiri carpets and shawls in silk and wool, along with sweetly painted papier-mâché boxes. Gujarat and Rajasthan contribute quaint, mirrored fabrics and stiff little cushion covers, with miniature paintings on silk.

There is brass: there are tall hookahs and paper-thin leather sandals with thongs for the big toe; there are embroidered jerkins made specially for the younger class of traveller, with pavement vendors trying to flog wooden chess sets or maybe beedies, tiny Indian cigarettes. There is even a Tibetan market.

But Shivani was extremely disapproving of Janpath generally, if not of the Kashmir Emporium. "Most things you buy there won't even last a day. First time you take the wrapping off they fall to bits."

Instead we made a quick round of the middle-level craft markets — places like Sundar Nagar or Hauz Khas, both in New Delhi. Most are closed on Sundays but are certainly worth a look-in on a weekday.

Her *coup de grâce*, however, was Saga, a craft department store on Mathura Road in New Delhi — one of scores of such establishments which have sprung up over the past five years, offering a regally calm atmosphere for shopping and a genuine prospect that the goods will be up to standard: jewellery (a golden choker with rubies caught my inexpert eye), see-through marble lamps, dusky cotton dhurries, stripy Kashmir sweaters and carpets, carpets aplenty, carpets everywhere.

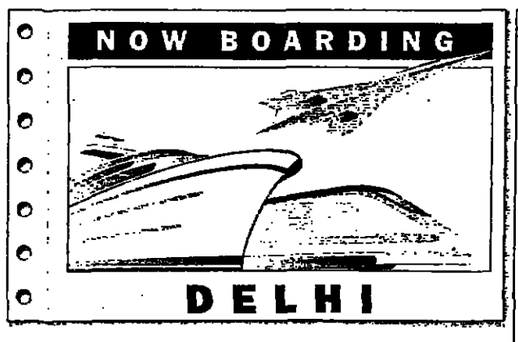
"Carpets are the big favourite with British visitors," said Shivani. "I always tell my people, don't scatter your money, just buy the one thing you really want and you can keep for ever."

ADDRESSES & CONNECTIONS

■ Adam Hopkins made his own travel arrangements. His car, driver and guide were provided by Cox and Kings (0171-873 5000); approx cost £35.

■ Further information: Indian Government Tourist Office (0171-437 3677).

■ Reading: *City of Djinns*, by William Dalrymple (Flamingo, £7.99). *Delhi, Agra & Jaipur*, by Louise Nicholson (Odyssey, £9.95). *Delhi and Agra: A Traveller's Companion*, by Michael Alexander (Constable, £7.95). *Delhi: City Guide* (Lonely Planet, £5.95).



■ **Who goes there:** Backpackers; package tourists on the North India circuit, and, from tomorrow, the Queen and Prince Philip, who will spend two nights at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the presidential palace, at the start of their state visit to India.

■ **Getting the ball rolling:** For free brochures, call 01233 211999. If you have specific inquiries, contact the Indian Government Tourist Office on 0171-437 3677 or write to them at 7 Cork Street, London W1X 2LN.

■ **Perfect timing:** Delhi is beautiful in October: the humidity and monsoon rains are over and temperatures are bearable. Winter nights become cool and daytime temperatures pleasant.

■ **Suitcase strategy. Take out:** a respectable outfit for social gatherings or obtaining help from officialdom; smog mask (road pollution is dreadful). **Bring back:** Carpets, batik-print wall hangings, marble boxes, jewellery, silk, brassware . . .

■ **The pound in your pocket:** £1 buys about 55 rupees; unobtainable in Britain but you will get a fair rate at the 24-hour exchange counter in the airport arrivals hall. Sterling or US dollar traveller's cheques useful; credit cards widely accepted in Delhi but less useful outside the city.

■ **Big no-nos:** Avoid the touts around Connaught Place, in central new Delhi, and Paharganj, near New Delhi Railway Station, who act for "government-approved travel agents" offering trips to Kashmir. They are unofficial outfits and it is not safe to go there, despite their protestations.

■ **Not to be missed:** Chandni Chowk, the main thoroughfare, with more than 1,000 tiny shops; tea on the lawn at the Imperial Hotel on Janpath; and for Raj atmosphere, driving around the elegant boulevards of New Delhi at dusk.

■ **Way to go:** British Airways (0345 222111) has daily direct flights to Delhi. Prices from £818, including tax. Air India (0181-745 1000) also flies daily to Delhi — return fares available through Trailfinders (0171-938 3366) start at £451 until October 30. Prices then rise gradually to £771 in the pre-Christmas week.

■ **Any good packages?** Cox and Kings (0171-873 5000) trips include a nine-day tour of the Golden Triangle, including Delhi, Agra and Jaipur, from £695, including flights, B&B, escorts, transfers and sightseeing. Other operators featuring Delhi: Dragoman (01728 861133), Bales Tours (01306 885991) and Abercrombie & Kent (0171-730 9600).

■ **Dull but essential:** British passport holders must buy a six-month tourist visa (£26). Details: (0171-836 8484).

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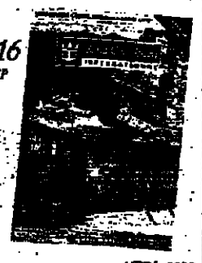

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SKI WEEKEND

Moonlight run and tumble down an ice wall

Forget the café and croissants; France is most favoured for skiing

A FALL of 1,000ft begins with a single turn. Mine came from acting the prat on what was supposed to be a romantic final run of the season, a midnight descent of the fabled Vallée Blanche in Chamonix.

Anyone who has ridden up to the viewing platform on the Aiguille du Midi (at 3,842m) will have been transfixed by the panorama below. On a busy weekend hundreds of ant-like skiers can be seen, skis on shoulders, inching their way down the steep spine of the icy *arête* (ridge) which leads from the Aiguille du Midi ice cave down to where it is safe and flat enough to don skis.

Anyone who has tackled the *arête* will probably swear that it is less than 3ft wide. When properly prepared, however, the path is broad enough for four to walk abreast — assuming those on the end don't mind the straight drop into Chamonix on the left or the equally vertical ice wall falling off to the right.

DOUG SAGER

It was this wall, from the top of the *arête*, which I elected to ski. I knew there was a large crevasse, a *rimaye*, in front of the glacier floor below, having seen the video in which the adventure skier Glen Plake bounces over the *rimaye* after falling farther up the slope. My own fall was a foregone conclusion from the very first jump turn, which deposited me on the tails of my skis, skittering on ice compacted over centuries, and slid me down the aptly named Poubelle (dustbin) Couloir.

Shaking with adrenaline, stirred with survival endorphins and nursing no more than a bruised thumb and ego, I counted my lucky stars as I skied all the way down into the deserted early-morning streets of Chamonix. It was some 22 km in the cool floodlight of a full moon; sparks flew as the steel edges of my skis scraped over rocks frozen in ice, and halogen-bright beams were reflected from quartz crystals deep within the tumbling crevasses of the Mer de Glace.

For some, France is croissants and chardonnay, crisp *flûtes* with *café au lait*. For me, it's this kind of skiing. Hundreds of thousands of recreational skiers, many of early intermediate standard, have skied the Vallée Blanche in good weather and with a mountain guide. Hundreds have died here too, on the Mont Blanc massif.

France claims to be "the world's biggest ski area". Statistics boast 371 "ski centres". Since this term is undefined it may be argued that Japan has more, but the French also claim the world's largest number of ski teachers, and the most lifts: 4,138.

France is the nation most favoured by adept British skiers, and by upmarket tour operators. The French tourist office counts 78 UK tour operators, more than for any other skiing nation. France is also home to the finest selection of luxury chalets in the Alps, and more ski-in, ski-out accommodation than anywhere else — as well as some of the most brutal architecture (Les Menuires, La Plagne, Tignes), the stingiest self-catering flats (two-person studios of 14 sq m) and resort *fonctionnaires* who have elevated the sniff and the sneer to an art form.

OPERATORS

NOWHERE have small specialist firms succeeded more than in France, whether it is for unabashed luxury, as with The Ski Company (0171-730 9600); for short breaks and corporate skiing, as with Ski Weekend (01367 241636); or for the most tasteful chalets concentrated in a single resort, as with Collineige (01276 24262) in Chamonix, Meriski (01451 844788) in Méribel and YSE (0181-871 5117) in Val d'Isère, *Doug Sager writes*.

But it is the six mainstream holiday companies which put France at the top of the popularity league with British skiers, around a quarter of whom choose the resorts of France over any other nation.

Judging from the average prices of holidays which were sold last year, France cost the same as, or less than, Austria and Italy — both of which are better known for their bargain skiing.

Among the mainstream companies, Crystal (0181-399 5144) offers the largest number of French resorts (25), followed by Inghams (0181-780 4444) and First Choice (0990 557 755), which both have 20 resorts, giving them one more than Thomson Ski and Snowboarding (0990 329 329). Neilson (0990 994 444) has 15 French resorts this year, and Airtours (01706 260 000) offers 12.

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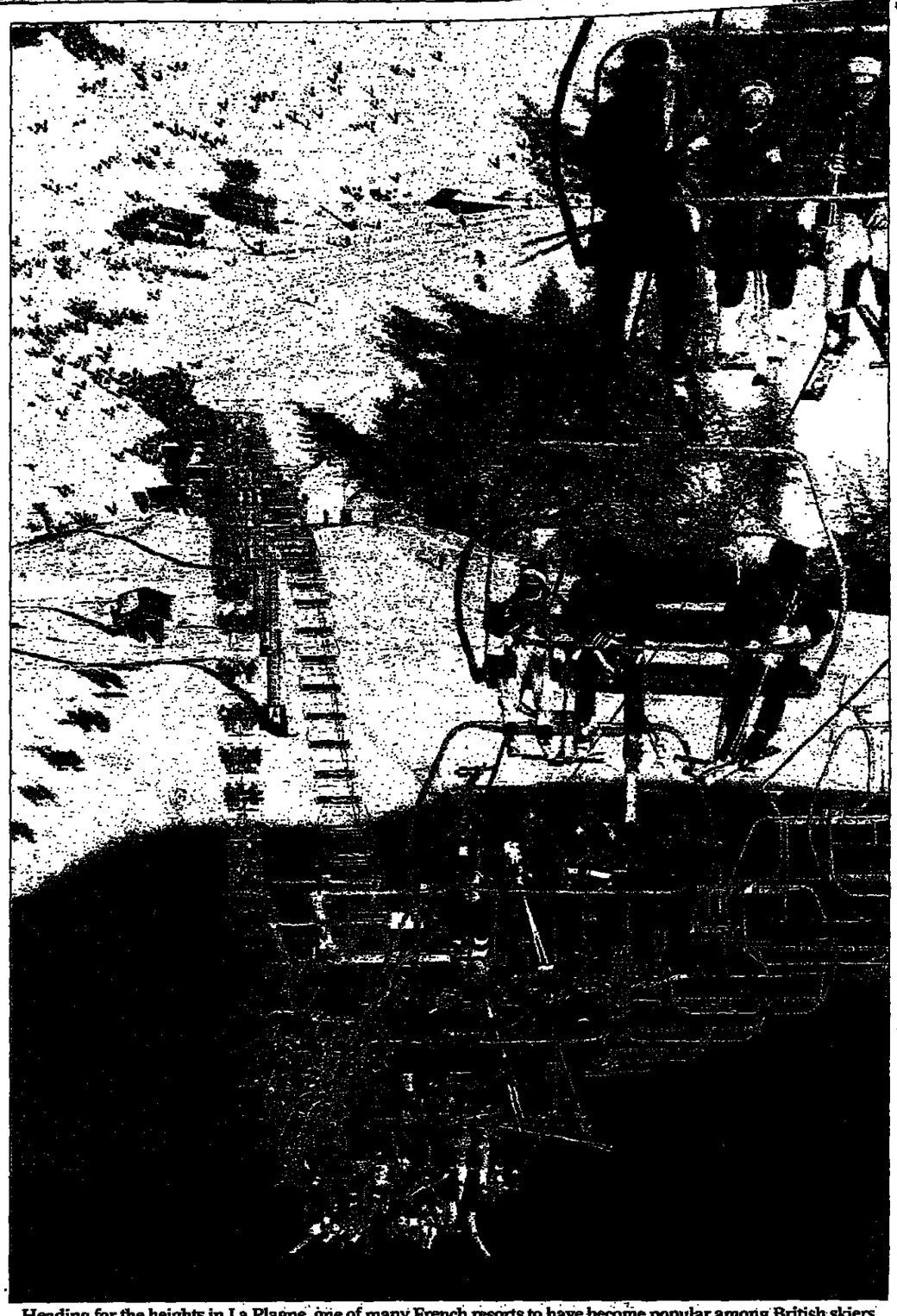
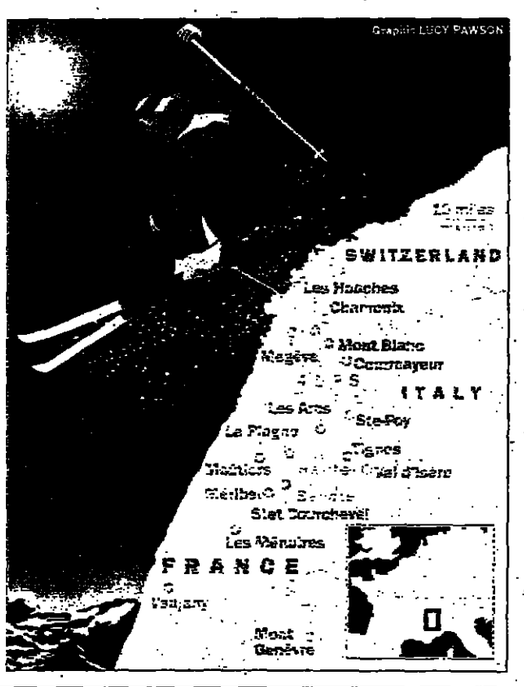


Heading for the heights in La Plagne, one of many French resorts to have become popular among British skiers

On superior slopes



BIGGEST AND BEST: MONT BLANC MASSIF

Everyone should ski on the Mont Blanc massif at least once — and during the French school holidays it seems as though everyone is. The skiing centres of the Chamonix valley between Le Tour and Les Houches are far-flung and still mostly unconnected, despite last season's cable car linking the intermediate areas of Le Brévant and La Flégère.

Yet this is France's biggest ski pass region, with 425 miles of pistes ranging through the Mont Blanc tunnel to Courmayeur in Italy and over to the chic slopes of Megève. The ski pass also includes unlimited access to sightseeing rides up the Aiguille du Midi and to Montenvers via cog railway, where the glacier hotel is expected to be open this winter.

I love Chamonix for its quiet corners, the tiny English Cemetery, the echoing halls of the Alpine Museum and the stained-glass windows in the town church featuring images of red devils forking skiers into crevasses. As a city, Chamonix lacks resort charm but makes up for it with plenty of affordable accommodation and local cafés.

Argentière is a better base for quick access to the advanced terrain of the Grands Montets. Around its old church, Argentière has a tranquil, ageless air, but the main road is a nightmare of traffic and tacky shops.

■ Collineige (01276 24262) is the premier chalet operator in the Chamonix valley, and is the British agent for Chamonix's Compagnie des Guides. Ski Weekend (01367 241636) is the leading firm for hotel-based short breaks and off-piste tours.

CHALET HAVEN: THE TROIS VALLEES

Together, Courchevel and Méribel should lead any affluent intermediate's list of top resorts. The Trois Vallées, with 375 miles of pistes, is the world's largest interconnected ski area. Courchevel, which is

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SKI WEEKEND

No to British guides

THOUSANDS of British skiers may have to make their own way around the pistes in France this winter if ski school directors are successful in banning foreign holiday company ski guides. Their qualifications are deemed unacceptable to the French authorities. *Doug Sager writes.*

Members of ESF, the French ski school, met this week to prepare plans to have British ski guides arrested by local gendarmes.

"Méribel, Courchevel, Tignes and Val d'Isère are where we anticipate problems," said Laurence Hicks, sales director of Inghams, after the Federation of Tour Operators met this week. Last year Inghams replaced British ski hosts with French ski teachers in Courchevel, at no cost to holidaymakers.

Crystal's brochure warns that its escorting service in France may be cancelled altogether.

Meriski director Colin Matthews believes his customers may have to pay £10 a day for an ESF escort, who has the right to cut ahead of holidaymakers in lift queues in the Trois Vallées.

MARK JUNAK

Méribel, which was founded by a Briton in 1938, is the best place to exploit the full range of Trois Vallées skiing and is more affordable than Courchevel

Continued from facing page

arguably the costliest resort in the world, is inundated with the international *nouveaux riches*, most recently Russians, but also boasts the best-groomed, widest pistes in the Alps.

Skiers returning to Courchevel from Mottaret should find queues less onerous, now that the Pas du Lac telecabine has been upgraded to eight persons per cabin. Méribel, founded by a Briton in 1938, is the best choice for skiers looking to exploit the full range of Trois Vallées skiing and is more affordable than Courchevel, though even more overrun by the English.

The other main Trois Vallées resorts are Les Menuires and Val Thorens, both typified by massive apartment complexes. Les Menuires has frequently been described as the ugliest of Alpine communities. Val Thorens has the advantage of altitude; at 2,300m it can claim to be the highest resort village in the Alps.

Val Thorens, with the highest skiing and most reliable snow, has suffered serious queues in the past, but bigger cable cars should ease congestion this season.

■ The chalet holiday flourishes like nowhere else in the Trois Vallées. In Méribel, Meriski (01451 844788) has a good range of luxury chalets and a high standards of in-resort service. In Courchevel, FlexiSki (0171-352 0044) bridges its chalet and hotel services with Le Lodge, surely the finest British-owned "chalet-style" accommodation in France. Le Ski (01484 548996) has ten well-positioned and moderately priced chalets.

SKIER'S CHOICE: L'ESPACE KILLY

Val d'Isère sets expert skiers *on the edge, while still affording* them expectation of coming home alive. The two Espace Killy areas of Tignes and Val d'Isère have half the skiing (225 miles) of the Trois Vallées, but all of it better. I recommend the untracked descent down "Mickey's Ears", the only exit involving a rubber-boat crossing of the lake and a climb up a waterfall.

Two ecologically sensitive underground funiculars and other well-placed lifts mean that this is one of the few areas in the Alps where lift queues do not inhibit wide-ranging skiing.

■ Nothing in Val d'Isère can beat The Ski Company (0171-559 8585) when it comes to no-cost-spared luxury ski-lodges with unobstructed views on the edge of the snowfields. YSE (0181-871 5117), with 19 chalets, has a wider selection across a broader price range. Ski Scott Dunn (0181-767 0202) has a small selection of luxurious catered accommodation.

SKIING WITH A PURPOSE: LA PLAGNE AND LES ARCS

These Sixties resorts are products of the uniquely French idea of constructing tower-block accommodation high up the mountain instead of expanding the ancient villages *on the valley floor. While they* are the logical choice for efficient and cheap access to the slopes, they are unpopular with the British chalet crowd.

La Plagne is a constellation of ten accommodation centres, six at snow-sure altitudes, and Les Arcs is a trio of towering apartment villages unimaginatively designated by altitude as Arc 1600, Arc 1800 and Arc 2000. The horror of hotel accommodation in La Plagne — broken lifts, unlit walkways, soulless furnishings — should not be minimised. The Kafkaesque corridors and slow, steel lifts of Arc 2000 are equally dispiriting.

But the skiing experience in both these resorts is the equal of the Trois Vallées, and can be had for half the price. Les Arcs and La Plagne have skiing up to 3,200m, and each has more than 125 miles of pistes. La Plagne consistently rates among the top ten resorts, and has been France's most popular mass-market destination for 30 years.

In Les Arcs, my ski teacher told me that the 2,126 vertical metre descent we made from the Aiguille Rouge to Villaroger is the longest on-piste run in the Alps. Certainly, dropping down off the rocks and into the "*couloir en S*" behind Les Arcs a few weeks later with British mountain guide Nick Parks was the most heart-thumping, knee-rattling skiing I experienced last winter.

There *are* British skiers who go to resorts to ski, as opposed to lunching on the mountain and lounging around the bars. And for the most skiing, right outside the door, at the cheapest price, La Plagne and Les Arcs serve their purpose.

■ As official UK agents for both resorts, Erna Low (0171-584 2841) has the most detailed knowledge of where to find acceptable accommodation. For those who really want to ski France the French way, Club Med (0171-581 1161) has centres at 2,000m in both resorts.

FAMILY HIDEAWAY: VAUJANY

In Vaujany there are no lift queues — thanks to a 160-person cable car running out of a hamlet with barely that number of permanent residents — and so there are mercifully few other people.

Since it is the only operator in Vaujany, it is impossible to speak of the village without mentioning Ski Peak, a family-oriented company with chalet, self-catering and hotel accommodation. Unlike most such moderately priced family operations, Ski Peak (01252 794941) has an astonishingly high standard of cuisine, whether presided over in the Hotel Rissiou by bow-tied "Big Nigel" Garner or served up in the stone-walled surroundings of Chalet Rostaing by the creative and conscientious New Zealand cuisinier Marcus Cull.

Vaujany's cable car gives direct access to Alpe d'Huez, an intermediate resort with an excellent snow record and a claim to the longest black runs in Europe. And many of the connecting slopes present their own challenges. Though rated red for intermediates, these mandatory passages are often too steep, narrow and crowded for comfort.

By contrast, the long — and at the end of the day, empty — run back home to Vaujany turned every atrophied adolescent in our group into a screaming downhill racer.

NEWEST ENTRY: SAINTE-FOY

At the top of the lifts we strap skis on to rucksacks and begin climbing. Three-quarters of an hour and only 300 vertical metres later, we click into bindings and one after the other jump two metres down into the soft, sheltered north-face powder of Foglietta, and 1,789 turns — I counted them.

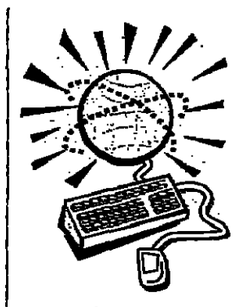
The next day, Top Ski guides drive us to nearby La Rosière, where as soon as we have skied across the Italian border on the Petit St Bernard, a helicopter whisks us up to the Ruitor glacier.

There we dance down slick, spring snow runs into the trees, fly back up, and plough down the other side 100 turns at a time in snow knee-deep and sparkling like diamonds.

This is the kind of skiing, each day different, that will make Ste-Foy a household name, even though this is the first season the resort has ever made a full winter appearance in any British brochure. Ste-Foy is ideally placed for skiing Tignes, La Plagne and Les Arcs — all in a one-day circuit. Its own skiing, on piste, is limited and tame enough for children. And much of its off-piste is pitched perfectly for teaching adults how to ski ungroomed snow.

Local officials stress that no further development will be permitted in Ste-Foy. The resort itself consists of a score of houses, mostly ancient structures incorporating the area's unique stone columns. The most impressive of them is the Colonnes, a farmhouse dating from the 1700s and now a character restaurant with exceptional terrine.

■ The Ski Company (0171-559 8585) introduces Ste-Foy this year and Yellowstone Chalet — in my opinion the loveliest chalet in the Alps — in a programme that includes two professional guides and van.



WEBWORLD

AS THE Microsoft magnate Bill Gates didn't hesitate to tell Jacques Chirac recently, France is way behind the rest of the world on the Internet.

My survey of the top 15 French resorts shows only four with independent Web sites, way behind Switzerland and Austria. All French resorts, however, appear on the official marketing site, Ski France (http://www.skifrance.fr), which presents piste maps, accommodation and the opportunity to reserve rooms and hire skis — in English. Ski France also posts snow reports and links, in French, to the weather service.

All independent resort sites are works in progress, but all offer English versions. Chamonix (http://www.chamonix.com) has the cleanest design. Courchevel (http://www.courchevel.com) lacks a piste map. Val d'Isère (http://www.val-disere.com) has the most ambitious pages, but surfers who leave out the dash when typing Val d'Isère's URL will be in for a shock. Les Deux Alpes (http://www.les2alpes.com) has a good photo gallery and online hotel booking.

How better to make use of spare time and the office Internet connection than by booking your ski holiday? The Holiday Store (http://www.fr-holidaystore.co.uk) has a wealth of information on French holidays year round, including the brochures of 13 ski operators and basic resort facts. Among the few specialist operators to France with their own Web sites, Flexiski (http://www.flexiski.co.uk) and Meriski (http://www.meriski.co.uk) are the best.

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AUSTRAVEL

Reading test for armchair travellers...

Nicole Swengley contacted a dozen travel bookshops to see what they offer the traveller. The litmus test was whether they could find a map of Zanzibar (right) — which proved to be trickier than you might expect . . .

NELLES MAPS

THE ONE place where armchair travellers, package holidaymakers and Amazon explorers are most likely to bump into each other is the travel bookshop. A pre-holiday expedition to track down books and guides can be almost as enjoyable as the trip itself.

Our survey of a dozen travel bookshops nationwide found that, while the specialists are better stocked and their staff more knowledgeable, chain stores are equally prepared to discuss customers' needs on the telephone, and offer a postal service — often just for the cost of postage, and without an extra packing charge.

I carried out a telephone test, calling incognito with a list of questions. First, I asked for a copy of the following three books: Fred Burnaby's classic Victorian travelogue *On Horseback Through Asia Minor* (reprinted in 1996 by OUP); *Yemen: Travels in Dictionary Land*, by Tim Mackintosh-Smith (John Murray, 1997); and Alexander Frater's *Chasing the Monsoon* (reprinted in paperback last year by Penguin/Viking), for which I have been searching unsuccessfully in high-street chains.

Next, I asked for a map of Zanzibar, which is notoriously hard to find. Only three of the bookshops contacted were able to provide one. Lastly, I asked for advice about a book covering Greek island-hopping. I asked whether the assistant recommended Lonely Planet's *Greece* or *The Blue Guide* — or was there a better choice? I was hoping they would suggest Thomas Cook's useful volume *Greek Island Hopping*.

Below are the results of my quest. The star ratings — up to five — were awarded for stock carried, the friendliness of staff and helpful advice given.

DES JENSON

DAUNT BOOKS

James Daunt, a former banker, set up his bookstore in 1990 when he spotted a gap in the market for a shop that grouped background reading — novels, history, food — alongside travel guides and reference books. "There's no logic to the layout in many bookshops," he says. "A biography of De Gaulle is in the biography section and a history of postwar France is in the history section. At Daunts, they're next to each other."

He claims that Daunt Books, which carries 25,000 new and second-hand titles, is Britain's only purpose-built bookstore. It was built in 1910 originally to house an antiquarian bookshop. A glass roof admits natural light to three floors with gallery-style display areas.

Books are grouped by continent, then country, in clearly laid-out sections. Each section contains guides, maps, travelogues, novels, biographies, histories and books on architecture, cookery, politics, art, anthropology and gardening. A good selection of out-of-print books, a vast back-list and an efficient computerised mail-order service account for sales of about 100,000 books annually.

Book launches are held roughly every fortnight. Readings and signings take place occasionally. Celebrity customers include Michael Palin, Ronnie Wood, Michael Caine and Bob Hoskins.

Shoppers are left to browse in peace. Annotated lists are supplied free for a particular country on request. "We are very opinionated and will say whether we think a book is any good or not," Mr Daunt says. In fact, the service goes way beyond this. An American lady rang from Cornwall saying she'd forgotten which B&B she'd booked. "We were able to locate it."

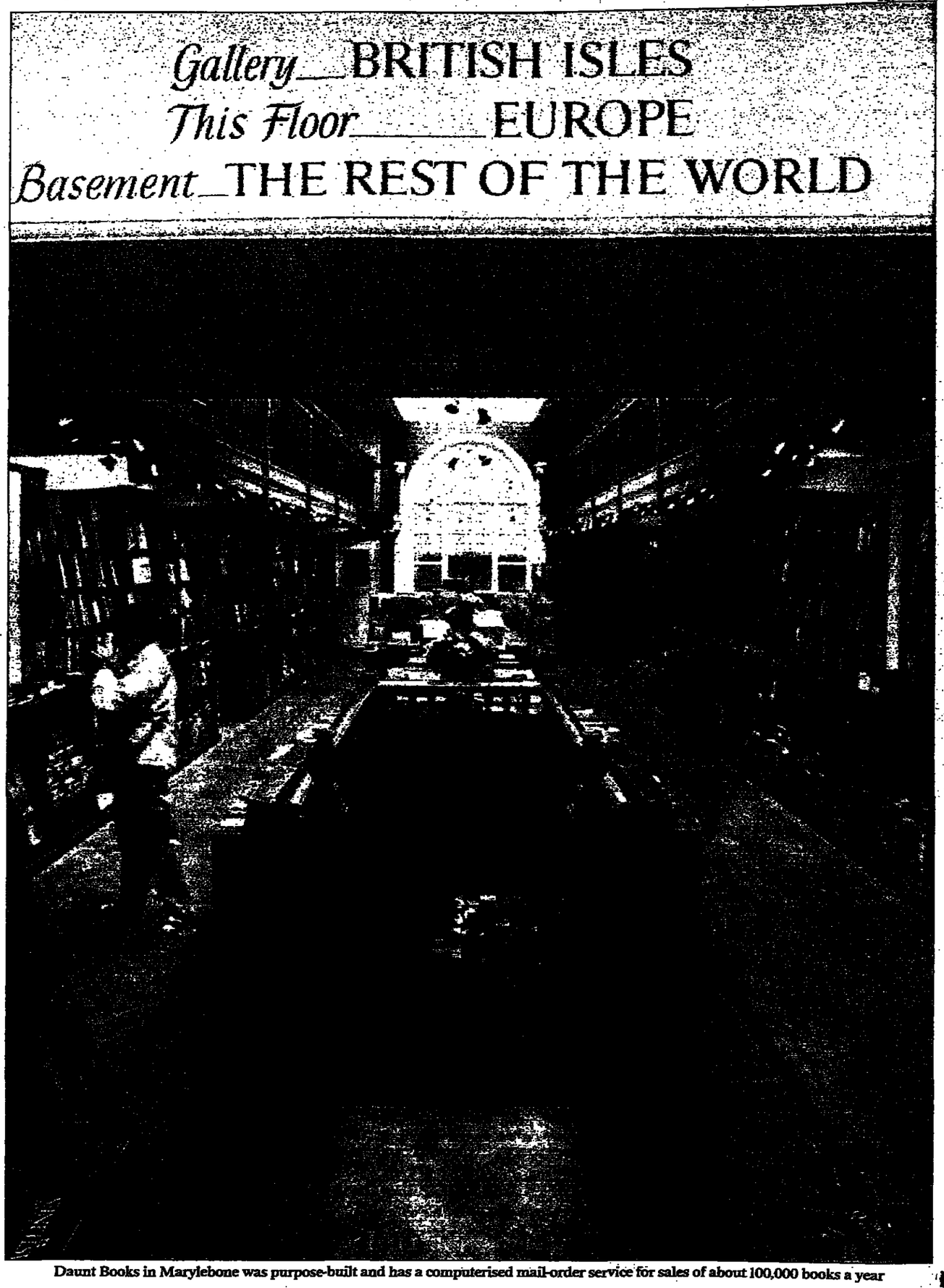
■ **Daunt Books, 83 Marylebone High Street, London W1 (0171-224 2295). Smaller, sister shop at 193 Haverstock Hill, NW3 (0171-794 4006).**

Rating: ★★★★★

Open: 9am-7.30pm, Mon-Sat

Test: A helpful assistant was familiar with the books I requested. The Yemen book was out of stock but could be with them in "a couple of days". I was referred to Stanfords in London for the map. The Rough Guide and Cadogan's Guide to the Greek Islands were recommended.

Mail order: Postage by weight; no packing charge.



Daunt Books in Marylebone was purpose-built and has a computerised mail-order service for sales of about 100,000 books a year

LONDON

■ **STANFORDS: 12-14 Long Acre, WC2 (0171-836 1321). Concessions at British Airways Shop, 156 Regent Street, W1 (0171-434 4744), and at Campus Travel, 52 Grosvenor Gardens, SW1 (0171-730 1314).**

Rating: ★★★★

Open: Mon 10am-6pm, Tues-Fri 9am-7pm, Sat 10am-7pm.

Established in 1852, Stanfords claims to be the world's largest map shop, with more than 30,000 titles, including Ordnance Survey and Admiralty charts. Strong on travel guides and books on mountaineering, walking, sea travel.

Test: All three books in stock. A helpful assistant told me he wasn't aware of a Zanzibar map in print, and recommended *Greek Island Hopping*. "It's updated annually and is written by someone who lives there," he said.

Mail order: £2.50 p&p for paperbacks; £3.25 p&p for hardbacks in UK.

■ **DILLONS, 82 Gower Street, W1 (0171-636 1577).**

Rating: ★★★★

Open: Mon-Fri 9am-7pm (Tues 9.30am), Sat 9.30am-6pm, Sun noon-6pm.

Five-storey shop with travel-related books (language, culture, food) in different sections. Travel books are in a busy basement. Good selection of travel guides and literature; big map section.

Test: Burnaby's book out of stock; the other two in stock. A polite but resigned assistant referred me to Stanfords in London for the map. I was told that the Lonely Planet book was the most popular for Greece but it was out of stock. *The Rough Guide to Greece* was recommended and I was also offered *Greek Island Hopping*.

Mail order: No standard charges. P&p on weight.

■ **NOMAD BOOKS, 781 Fulham Road, SW6 (0171-736 4000).**

Rating: ★★★

Open: Mon-Fri 9am-8pm, Sat 10am-6pm, Sun 11am-5pm.

Guides mixed with travel writing and other books relating to the country.

Test: Frater's book on order at time of calling; other two were out of stock but orders would arrive "in a couple of days". No Zanzibar map. A friendly assistant offered to order the books and recommended *Greek Island Hopping*.

Mail order: Postage depends on weight. No packing charge.

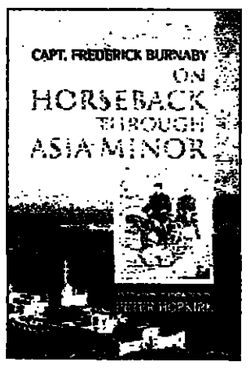
OUTSIDE LONDON

■ **BLACKWELLS, 50 Broad Street, Oxford (01865 792792).**

Rating: ★★★★

Open: Mon-Sat 9am-6pm (Tues 9.30am). Sun 11am-5pm.

A 120-year-old family business. Main shop stocks travel writing. Map & Travel Shop at 53 Broad Street stocks about 15,000 titles, half guides, half maps, grouped by continent, then country. Worldwide map-ordering service.



Test: Burnaby and Mackintosh-Smith books in stock. Frater's would have to be ordered from the USA — "six to eight weeks". I was referred to Stanfords in London for the map. Recommended *Greek Island Hopping*.

Mail order: £1.75 p&p for one paperback; £2.75 p&p for up to three paperbacks by first class post in UK. £2.75 p&p by Securicor in the UK.

■ **HEFFERS, 20 Trinity Street, Cambridge (01223 568521); 19 Sidney Street, Cambridge (01223 568467).**

Rating: ★★★★

Open: Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm, Sun 11am-5pm.

Travel writing and huge number of guides stocked at Trinity Street branch. Maps (tourist, foreign and whole Ordnance Survey range), accommodation guides, street atlases and some other books stocked at Sidney Street.

Test: An assistant took my list and rang back 30 minutes later to say the literature was stocked at Trinity Street. She had no Zanzibar map but did recommend *Greek Island Hopping*. A second call to Trinity Street established that other requests were in stock.

Mail order: £1.55 p&p per kg to UK destinations.

■ **AUSTICKS, 91 The Headrow, Leeds (0113 2439607).**

Rating: ★★★

Open: Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm.

About a third of this general bookstore is devoted to travel. Good selection of maps and a reasonable choice of guides. Books are grouped by continent, then country, and include some travelogues.

Test: The Yemen book was in stock. Burnaby's book was not, but could be ordered "in three days". Frater's book would take "three days from a wholesaler; ten days from the publisher". A helpful assistant told me that no map of Zanzibar was available in the UK. She recommended *Greek Island Hopping*, which was out of stock, but could be ordered "in two days' time".

Mail order: P&p charge depends on weight.

■ **POWNEY'S BOOKSHOP, 4 & 5 St Alkmund's Place, Shrewsbury (01743 369165).**

Rating: ★

Open: Mon-Sat 9am-5.30pm.

General bookstore with large travel section comprising half maps, half guides. Books are grouped by country with fairly good choice of guides. Some travel writing.

Test: An assistant took my requests and returned three minutes later to say none was in stock and that there was no Zanzibar map. For Greek island-hopping, she recommended an Eye Witness guide "if you want pictures, although it's too large to carry around", or a Baedeker's Greek Islands guide. Neither Lonely Planet's *Greece* nor the Blue Guide were in stock.

Mail order: Small packing charge, plus postage.

■ **STANFORDS, 29 Corn Street, Bristol (0117 9299966).**

Rating: ★★★★★

Open: Mon-Sat 8.30am-6pm (Tues 9.30am).

Two-storey bookstore, not as big as London branch but has similar range (if not quantity) of stock. Books grouped by continent, then country, with affiliated subjects like such as cooking alongside guides. Sections for travel writing, climbing, cycling, geology.

Test: All the travel writing was in stock. An assistant recommended Cadogan's Greek island-hopping guide and rang me back quickly to say no dedicated Zanzibar map existed but that Nelles' Tanzania map included a good Zanzibar insert. She even told me the scale of the insert.

Mail order: postage depends on weight; no packing charge.

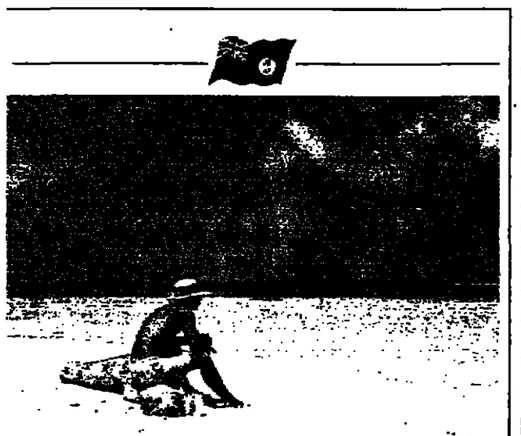
DILLONS, 2-4 St Ann's Square, Manchester (0161-832 0424).

Rating: ★★

Open: Mon-Fri 9am-7pm (Thurs 8pm), Sat 9am-6pm.

A flagship store, Dillons has

Continued on facing page



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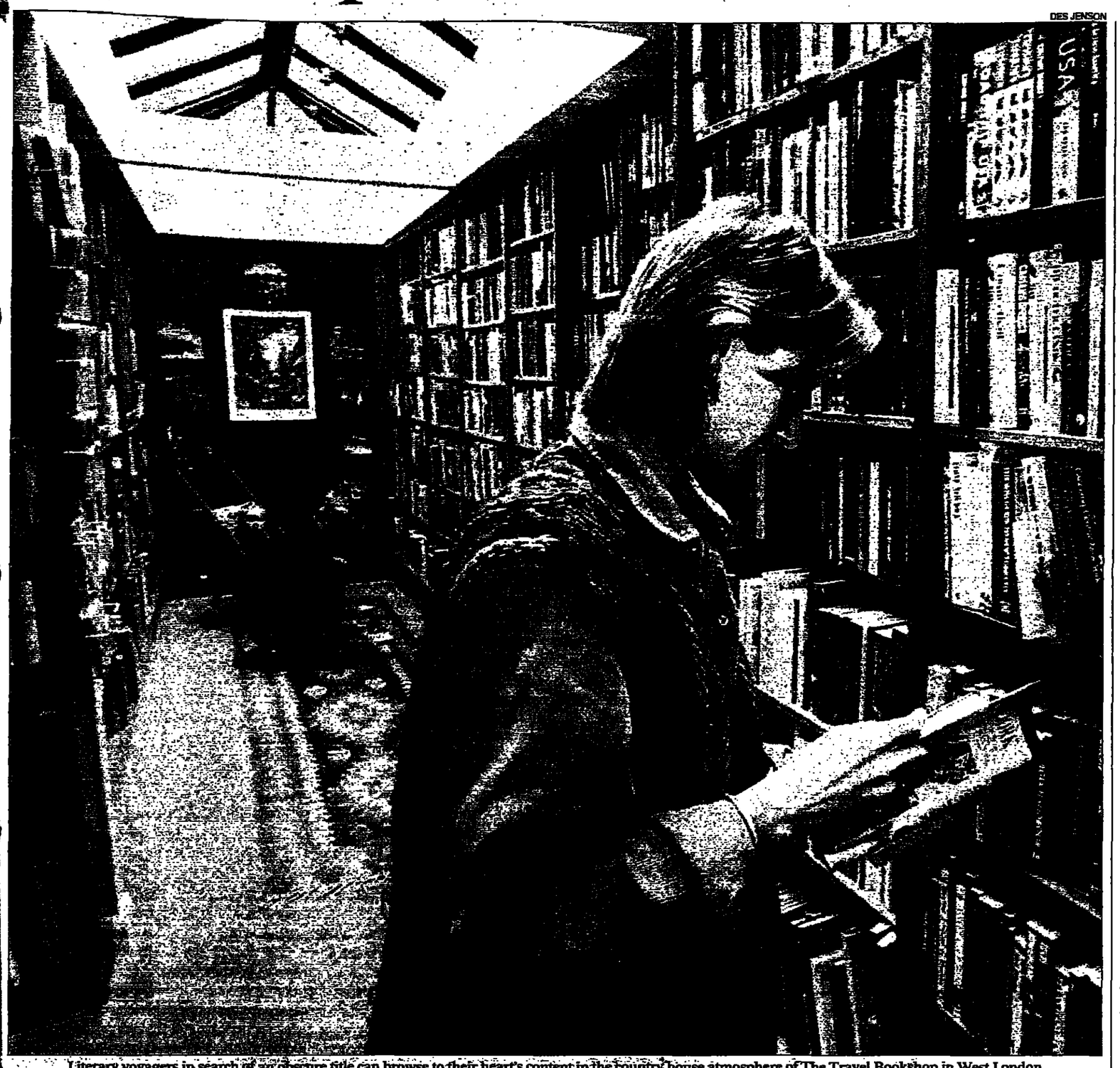


DES JENSON

Literary voyagers in search of an obscure title can browse to their heart's content in the country house atmosphere of The Travel Bookshop in West London

On the road through the ages

When it comes to travel guides to Britain, we tend to think of such volumes as Bill Bryson's wise-cracking British tour, *Notes From A Small Island*, or Lonely Planet's latest offering, *Walking in Britain*.

But books from an earlier era are still worth taking on journeys, even if they are long out of date. In particular, Daniel Defoe, Samuel Johnson and William Cobbett left a remarkable legacy.

Their separate journeys took place at 50-year intervals — Defoe in the 1720s, Johnson in the 1770s and Cobbett in the 1820s. Each journey became an opinionated, best-selling travel book. Taken together, they form an offbeat series that can show modern travellers how places once looked and convey how they once felt.

The idea of travelling Britain for pleasure was only just catching on when Defoe wrote *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, a kind of Rough Guide for the Georgian Age. The ex-soldier, spy, businessman and author of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders* was 62 in 1722 when he retraced some of the journeys of his younger days — and cribbed material from other sources — to begin "a description of the most flourishing and opulent country in the world".

In 1773, at the age of 63, Dr Johnson set out with his friend James Boswell on what became his *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, with an idea of "going where nobody goes and seeing what nobody sees".

In Inverness, Johnson noted how many people were still barefoot. For him, this was the last place with regular coach communication, and he had to hire a horse to head west, travelling light as a man "content to leave behind him everything but himself".

All recent travel improvements — the canals, the turnpike roads, the stagecoaches and later the railways — were disliked by the cantankerous, radical former Sergeant-Major Cobbett, who saw the growth of towns and cities destroying rural England.

In 1822, at the age of 60, he began four years of *Rural Rides*, cherishing the countryside and championing the poor. While we might value the beauty and peace of Windsor Great Park, for Cobbett, enclosures, country houses and gardens in the area "have beggared 20 agricultural villages and hamlets" and made Windsor Forest "as bleak, as barren and as villanous a heath as ever man set his eyes on".

A century later, younger men were writing the classics that form a direct link to our own age. J.B. Priestley was 39 when he climbed aboard the new-fangled motorcoaches for his shrewd *English Journey* in 1933.

George Orwell, the natural successor to Cobbett, was 33 when he worked his way through the industrial heartlands in 1936 for *The Road to Wigan Pier*, before leaving to fight in the Spanish Civil War.

Perhaps the best travels work as a kind of farewell tour, where the completed journey also completes something in the traveller. At 44, Bryson wrote his railway tour of Britain before moving to his native America.

He now lives in New England (well, somebody has to). But at least he is able to finish his book by saying with some certainty: "I turned from the gate and got in the car and knew without doubt that I would be back."

● *Notes From A Small Island*, Bill Bryson (Black Swan, £6.99); *Walking in Britain* (Lonely Planet, £11.99); *A Tour Through the Whole Island of Britain*, Daniel Defoe (Penguin, £9.99); *Journey to the Western Islands of Scotland*, Samuel Johnson (Penguin, £6.99); *Rural Rides*, William Cobbett (Penguin, £7.50); *English Journey*, J.B. Priestley (Mandarin, £7.99); *The Road to Wigan Pier*, George Orwell (Penguin, £6.99).

DAVID WILSON

THE TRAVEL BOOKSHOP

Sarah Anderson, owner of The Travel Bookshop, tells a story of two of her customers staring at the Central Asian bookshelves, then turning to each other and saying: "Didn't I meet you on the Silk Route?"

The encounter sums up the atmosphere and clientele in this browser-friendly shop, in style like an old-fashioned country-house library. The cosy interior is kitted out with kilims and stencilled walls that are lined, floor to ceiling, with wooden bookshelves. No surprise, then, that it has become something of a travellers' rendezvous.

When Ms Anderson opened her bookshop in 1979, the idea of stocking fiction, history, geology and culture alongside guidebooks and maps was new. And with the explosion of guides and reprints, she says it is impossible to stock everything.

"It's the mix that's important. We aim to embrace the whole subject, but we're careful in choosing." Out-of-print and secondhand books — "people still like hardbacks" — include travel literature from the mid-19th century onwards, including classic voyages and explorations, original Baedeker's and Murray's guides. It is also a good place to look for collectors' items such as Stanley's two-volume first edition of *In Darkest Africa*.

Regular events include book launches, promotions and signings by the likes of Michael Palin, Gavin Young, Eric Newby, and Dervla Murphy.

Shoppers include locals, out-of-town travellers, students, hippies, yuppies, film location folk, armchair explorers and writers including Colin Thubron, Geoffrey Moorhouse, Miles Kington, Charles Glass and Dea Birkett. As for service: "Someone rang from Majorca and said he hadn't got the correct maritime charts, so we faxed information on harbour depths via satellite to his boat," says Ms Anderson.

This autumn the shop goes on the Internet (orders by credit card) with a short description of most of the books stocked. Check it out at: www.thetravelbookshop.demon.co.uk.

■ The Travel Bookshop, 13-15 Blenheim Crescent, W11 (0171-229 5260)

Rating: ★★★★★

Open: 10am-6pm, Mon-Sat

Test: Had Burnaby's book. Other two out of stock, with orders taking "a couple of days". They had a Zanzibar map. A friendly assistant told me to buy *Greek Island Hopping*. "*The Blue Guide* is like Pevsner," she warned.

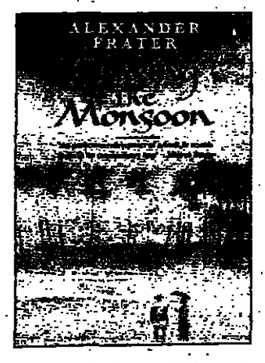
Mail order: Postage depends on weight; no packing charge.

Continued from page 24

reading areas with sofas. A third of the first floor is devoted to travel. Guides are grouped by country with sections for maps and travel writing.

Test: I was asked for the books' ISBN numbers, which I didn't have. The assistant made a meal out of checking one computer programme for the numbers, then trying another to see if the books were in stock. I was put on hold for several minutes while he checked the shelves. Only the Frater book was in stock. I was told the others would take ten days to two weeks. No Zanzibar map. I was recommended the Rough Guide or Lonely Planet's *Greece*.

Mail order: Postage depends on weight; no packing charge.



JAMES THIN, 53-59 South Bridge, Edinburgh (0131-556 6743).

Rating: ★★★

Open: Mon-Fri 9am-10pm, Sat 9am-5.30pm, and also Sunday from 11am-5pm.

The flagship store of this family-owned company, which has 17 bookshops in Scotland, is housed in a four-storey Victorian building. The ground-floor travel area stocks guides, maps and travel writing. Affiliated subjects are available in dedicated sections elsewhere. Travel books are also stocked at its other Edinburgh branch at 57 George Street.

Test: I gave my list and the assistant rang back ten minutes later to say that only the Yemen book was in stock. The others would take two weeks to order. No Zanzibar map, but I was offered Nelles' Tanzania map (which has the Zanzibar insert). The Rough Guide was recommended for Greece — "no pictures but lots of maps" — and the Eye Witness guide — "lots of pictures".

Mail order: Two or more books: first class: £3.25; second class, £2.75 in UK.

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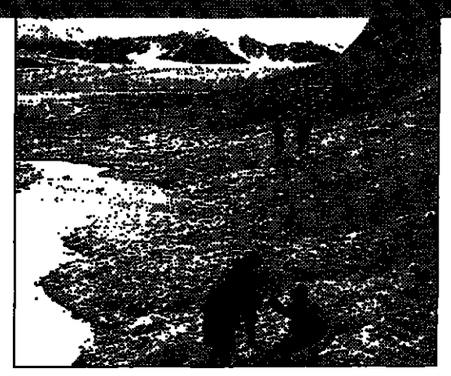

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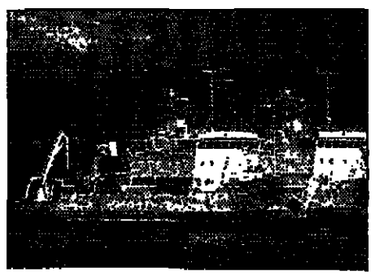

The Itinerary

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Day 2 Fair Isle. The most isolated settlement in the British Isles. Visit the bird observatory, famous for its work in tracking the movement of migrant birds (there is always the chance of a fall of migrants, anything from a red-spotted bluethroat to a red-footed falcon).

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Brian Pedley boards the Royal Mail postbus for a leisurely tour of the Staffordshire moors

High days on the post trail

At Onecote in Staffordshire the villagers tell how a farmer, returning one night from market at nearby Leek, was plucked from the ground by a headless horseman. The horse took flight over drystone walls and fields. Hours later, the hapless rustic was dumped, quivering with terror, by his farm gate.

These days, the same 80-mile circular tour of the Staffordshire moors is covered less stressfully by the Royal Mail postbus. The twice-daily ride is also a good deal more entertaining. Dave, John, Paul, Ken and Debbie, the drivers, take no risks, particularly in the brutal winters. Then, the little red bus goes equipped with blankets, hot flasks and Kendal Mint Cake.

Today, as usual, the 11-seater vehicle rattles out of Leek and down a switchback of country lanes through Staffordshire's Best Kept Village of Warslow. An elderly gardener waves from among his magnificently flowering runner beans. His cottage quickly vanishes behind the brow of the hill as Postman Dave drops a gear for a tortuous downhill stretch. Almost immediately we are climbing again. Ahead of us, almost bumping their heads against the clouds, are the white limestone and dark gritstone crags of the southern Peak District, the National Park which contains a third of the Staffordshire moorland as it rises and falls between villages and farmsteads.

> The buses were meant as a lifeline to rural communities, but now backpacks can outnumber the shopping baskets

"Better than a ride at Alton Towers," says Dave, nudging the gear stick up into third.

Adapted as a public transport service 30 years ago, Royal Mail postbuses now carry 125,000 passengers a year on 228 routes in Britain. Originally they were intended as a lifeline to rural communities, but nowadays backpacks sometimes outnumber the shopping baskets. With mail to collect, the routes may not be the quickest, but they certainly tend towards the scenic — and thanks to Postman Pat the Postbuses have even assumed a modest glamour.

STAFFORDSHIRE MOORLANDS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Something to write home about: passengers prepare to board the postbus at the Royal Oak Inn at Wetton, headquarters of the World Toe Wrestling Championships

From the windows of Dave's bus, his passengers can enjoy the slow beat of Staffordshire farm life. Shadows race across the medieval patchwork of green fields and golden stubble as thick clouds whip across the August sky. The threat of thunder adds a hint of urgency to the harvest, where squadrons of crows gorge on the insects fleeing the combine harvesters.

We pass the great hump of Ecton Hill where, until the last century, more than 300 miners toiled to meet half the world's demand for copper.

Margaret, a retired schoolmistress, was enjoying her weekly trip to Leek. "You get three hours there, which is quite long enough for people to do most of their shopping," she said, passing Dave a letter for posting. "And the hikers can be fun . . . With any luck you get to sit on a some strong young man's knee."

Leek, with its ornate buildings and cobbled marketplace, is justly nicknamed "The Queen of the Moorlands". Go there on a Wednesday, market day, and the rows of stalls run six deep, selling everything from country jackets to Country & Western CDs. In the covered butter market next door, one trader has the most sumptuous stock of "nursery food" to be seen outside a House of Commons dining room. The stall creaked under bubble & squeak, spotted dick, jam roly-poly and Bakewell tart. In Leek market, and along the cobbled alleyways, every baker worthy of the name sells freshly griddled oatcakes. One shop, Asplins, does ten fillings. Cooked thin like crêpes, but chewier, they pre-date pizzas as the traditional fast food of Staffordshire.

Leek's architecture reflects its great days as a 19th-century silk capital and as a centre of the Arts and Crafts movement led by the artist, designer, poet and politician William Morris. The baroque, copper-domed Nicholson Institute, which houses the public library and the arts and science college, is one of many prized buildings that survive from Leek's golden age.

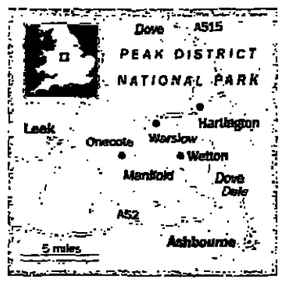
Even the street furniture bears the stamp of Morris. Where else are public seats designed to look like strutting peacocks?

If Leek is Queen, then Hartington, just across the border in Derbyshire, is Princess. When the postbus stops here, Margaret's hikers tend to get off and follow the paths south to Dovedale. Others will cheerfully pass the five hours until the next postbus passes through, enjoying an archetypal English village, with Edwardian parish pump, duck pond, stone cottages, tea rooms, working farms, a pottery and a church on a hill. Some will dash into Ye Olde Cheese Shoppe for wedges of prize-winning Stilton. Cheese enthusiasts buy both the blue and the white.

The joy of riding the postbus is its flexibility. A few stops on, at Grindon, I leave Dave and his passengers to return to Leek and strike out into the great limestone gorge of the Manifold valley. To follow the path to the valley floor is to be swallowed whole, first by meadows dusted pink with napweed, then by woods that grow darker with the descent. Through overhanging beeches comes the first glimpse of Thor's Cave, high on the peak that forms one side of the valley. The people of the Dark Ages named it after the Norse god of thunder because of the strong winds that boom and howl through its vast mouth. Now it echoed to the excited squeals of a pack of Brownies that had disappeared inside.

Wetton, another of the postbus stops, is just a short stroll from the cave. Its Royal Oak Inn is headquarters of the World Toe Wrestling Championships, held each June. Revived in 1994 with sponsorship from Scholl, toe wrestling is arousing interest as far away as Japan. The sport is similar to arm wrestling and, regulars would have us believe, exceedingly ancient.

"Cave drawings at Ecton Hill clearly show two men locking toes for the favours of a Neolithic lady," insists landlord George Burgess, drawing a pint. I had a suspicion that I was being taken for a ride — but it was far more entertaining than being taken for a ride by a headless horseman.



FACT FILE

- Brian Pedley travelled with Staffordshire Moorlands Tourism Department (01538 483741). For a visitors' guide, write to: 1 Market Place, Leek, Staffordshire ST13 5HH. The tourist information office also produces the official guide to Leek, and a self-guided William Morris Town Trail.
- The Royal Mail Postbus leaves Leek bus station twice daily at 10.20am and 2.53pm. The round trip takes just under two hours.
- Where to stay: Lee House Farm, Leek Road, Waterhouses, near Leek, Staffs ST10 3HW (01538 308439). An 18th-century house in the Peak District, near the Manifold valley. B&B from £20 per person.
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AROUND THE WORLD A WEEKEND GUIDE

Quay to catastrophe

REUTERS

Most of the British tourists on board the *Romantica*, above, bought their trips while in Cyprus and can make no claim for compensation in the UK

Steve Keenan explains why tour operators are giving a wide berth to passengers caught up in a cruise ship fire

British tour operators are legally distancing themselves from passengers booked on the ill-fated cruise ship that caught fire off Cyprus last weekend. The 103 Britons who were aboard the *Romantica* are waiting for details of compensation to be offered from the ship's owners, Med Duchess Lines.

But it appears that none of them pre-booked the cruise through an operator before leaving the UK. And few, if any, booked through a UK operator representative in Limassol, instead preferring to book direct at the quayside.

People are attracted to such deals by prices as low as £50 per person, squeezing costs to the bone and cutting out the mark-up of the tour operator.

British holiday companies, including market leader Thomson Holidays, say their customers are only entitled to pursue any compensation or damages claim through the UK courts if they booked the cruise with them. Thirteen of the Britons on the cruise ship had booked their holiday to Cyprus through Thomson but they had paid for the cruise locally, said a spokeswoman for the company.

"We are responsible for something we actually recommend. But if someone chooses to book off their own bat, that is where the line is drawn."

Libra Holidays — which was to feature the *Romantica* this winter for the first time — also had eight clients on board who booked direct. Andreas Drakou, Libra's managing director, said: "I don't think the rules cover people who book in the resort."

Tamsin Carnall, legal adviser at the Association of British Travel Agents, added: "If you book through a tour operator in the UK, you have recourse to English law. If you book in the resort, you are contracted with a local company."

Many of those rescued will be covered for loss of possessions through their own insurance. But those not covered, or dissatisfied with any compensation offered, are likely to have to fight their case in a Greek court. The *Romantica* was Cypriot-flagged.

The blaze highlighted the huge rise in popularity — and the risks involved — of cruising in Cyprus in recent years.

This year, more than 50,000 Britons are expected to take a variety of short cruises from the island, the biggest market sector for cruise companies ahead of the fast-emerging Russian market.

The most popular trips are to Haifa in Israel, Port Said in Egypt, or a three-night combination of the two, which the *Romantica* was doing.

Industry expert Tony Peisley said: "Cyprus offers a chance to see another country such as Egypt at dirt-cheap prices. That is why a lot of the ships are fairly basic."

Peter Adamou, UK manager for another Limassol-based cruise company, Louis Cruise Lines, said his company expected to carry 46,000 Britons this year. Although featured by UK tour operators, most passengers booked direct.

He denied that the market is suffering from a shoddy image. "It is not connected with the age of the ships. It is how much work is carried out on them and how much is spent."

Joanna Hunter tracks down this week's holiday deals; and Alex McWhirter finds the cheapest flights

PACK YOUR BAGS

☐ **British Airways Holidays (0990 224224) is offering seven nights, accommodation only, at the Silver Sands Resort Hotel on the south coast of Barbados, from £499, including return flights from Gatwick, taxes, transfers, and transfer flights from UK regional airports. Departures Wednesday (October 15) and Thursday.**

☐ *Stretch your legs on Acorn* Activities (01432 830083) Walking Week in the Brecon Beacons from October 18-25. *Seven nights' full-board* accommodation at Brecon's Castle Hotel plus the services of a guide costs £350.

☐ **Follow the ancients through the Aegean with Seafarer (0171-234 0500). Its seven-night Voyage of Discovery leaves Athens on October 17 and sails to Alexandria, Port Said, Ashdod and Kusadasi, finally docking in Istanbul. Fares start at £449pp, including flights from Gatwick or Manchester, transfers, taxes, full board, lectures and entertainment.**

☐ The first Pumpkin Festival in Picardie, France, begins on October 12. Picardie Pauses (0171-836 2232) offers two nights accommodation for the price of one and Hoverspeed return crossing from Dover to Calais: from £71 for two.

☐ **Popping out for a kebab could acquire a whole new allure. Fourteen nights' self-catering at the Esin studio apartments in Marmaris on Turkey's Aegean coast with Sunset Holidays (01204 701000, departing from Gatwick, Manchester, Newcastle or Glasgow on Monday (October 13), costs £252 including flights, taxes and transfers.**

☐ Fraught parents should take their charges to Efteling in Holland, which is the largest theme park in Europe, at half-term. It is open until 8pm all week from October 18. Amsterdam Travel Services (01242 260960) is offering a family of four one night's B&B accommodation at the Efteling Hotel, entrance to the Efteling park and return ferry from Ramsgate to Ostend for £72 per person.

Departures: Monday October 13 to Saturday October 18
Lowest available published fares for return travel.

Route	Promotional Fare*	Flexible Fare*
London-Amsterdam	from £58 Easyjet (ex-Luton)	£248 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London-Barcelona	from £98 Easyjet (ex-Luton)	from £138 (ex-Luton)
London-Dublin	from £59 Ryanair (ex-Stansted/Luton)	from £99 Ryanair (ex-Stansted/Luton)
Manchester-Dublin	from £59 Ryanair	from £109 Ryanair
London-Edinburgh	from £70 Easyjet (ex-Luton)	£198 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London-Geneva	£99mw/£109we BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)	£396 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London-New York	£199mw/£229we BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)	£844 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London-Orlando	£299mw/£329we BA (ex-Gatwick)	£992 BA (ex-Gatwick)
London-Paris	£59mw/£69we BA (ex-Gatwick)	£238 BA (ex-Heathrow/Gatwick)
London-Rome	from £138 Debonair (ex-Luton)	from £178 Debonair (ex-Luton)

Contacts
British Airways (BA): 0345 222111
Debonair: 0500 146200
Easyjet: 0990 292929
Ryanair: 0541 569569

Notes
* Prices shown in the left-hand column are the lowest published excursion fares. Prices shown in the right-hand column are the lowest available flexible fares which do not require a Saturday night stay and which, in most cases, allow changes or cancellation without penalty. In all cases you are advised to check the restrictions, if any, when booking.
* Availability is not guaranteed.
* Fares shown do not include any applicable taxes or security fees.

CAA calls for passenger levy

THE collapse of Turkish specialist SunTours this week has rekindled demands for a levy on package holidays, to be paid by passengers, to protect them if companies collapse, *writes Steve Keenan*. If approved by Parliament, a levy could add up to £10 a head to holiday costs.

September and October are the prime months for tour operator failures as cash flow from last-minute bookings dries up and bills for hoteliers, airlines and other suppliers must be met. Ten of last year's 26 failures were in those two months. The CAA's Air Travel Trust fund, the pool of bond money held to refund and repatriate, was £5.3 million in the red at the end of the year to March 31, 1997.

The CAA is looking at a levy, which would need parliamentary approval. Meanwhile, it is continuing to repatriate the 7,000 SunTours customers stranded when it went out of business. The process of refunding 15,000 other customers will then begin.

● CAA: 0171-832-5600

JILL CRAWSHAW'S CHRISTMAS ABROAD

Going solo in Sweden

IF you are single and aged 30 to 69, Solo's (0181-951 2800) has more than 40 Christmas holidays ranging from golfing in America to traditional hotel breaks in Britain.

For the energetic, a Swedish adventure includes a day's sightseeing in Stockholm, a night in an igloo in the village of Jukkasjarvi near Kiruna, a visit to an elk farm and lots of *glogg* (spicy mulled wine) at a Lapp inn. On Christmas Eve, there is sledging, tobogganing or skiing, as well as a traditional Christmas buffet.

On Christmas Day there is a snowmobile safari to catch lunch ice-fishing and then cook it over an open fire. Dog sledging, cross-country skiing and dancing round off Boxing Day. Departing on December 20, the price of £1,475 covers flights, a week's half-board accommodation, sightseeing and Christmas meals.

TRAVEL INK

Where's Rudolph? Christmas in Sweden offers a chance to find him

Right tracks for the Rockies

HAVE a moveable Christmas on board one of the world's great trains. *The Canadian*. Great Rail Journeys (01904 679969) is organising a 12-day holiday departing on December 20. The 2,800-mile journey across Canada from Toronto takes three days in your own sleeper, with all meals included. The journey finishes with a stay in Vancouver and two days in Victoria. The cost is £1,390 for flights, three nights' full board on the train, seven nights' B&B in hotels and sightseeing tours.

Holistic days

DISCOS and drinking sprees are out (though local wine is allowed), and the Christmas fare is mainly vegetarian on the holistic holidays available from Neal's Yard Agency (07000-783 704). The company specialises in holidays focusing on personal development, meditation and yoga. Groups are limited to about 16 people and there are no single supplements. A two-week break, departing on December 20, to the Caribbean island of Tobago, offers personal development courses and workshops on life choices and life changes. It costs £755 full-board, excluding flights.

On a 21-day tour of southern India, travelling from Madras to Bombay and leaving on December 21, holistic holidaymakers can escape the stresses of Christmas by visiting temples and tranquil ashrams with a meditation teacher. The price, including flights and full-board hotel accommodation, is £2,600.

NO tinsel and no turkey, promises Sherpa Expeditions (0181-577 2717) on its 15-day Christmas escape to the "Valley of a Thousand Kasbahs" in Morocco's Sahro range. A Berber guide leads a trek into this rocky wilderness, with three to seven hours' trekking each day. Accommodation is in tents, with three nights in a hotel in Marrakesh. Christmas Day is spent on a seven-hour walk down a river valley, later crossing a hot, dusty plain occupied only by nomads and their camels.

Disney's party

FUN is promised at Disneyland Paris as it celebrates the finale to its fifth birthday this Christmas, with parades themed on the *Nutcracker Suite* ballet. Leger Holidays (01709 839839) offers a five-day break departing on December 23, which includes return coach travel, four nights' B&B in the Paris area, a two-day pass to the theme park and an excursion around Paris. It costs £239 for adults, £169 for teenagers 12-16, £149 for children aged three to 11. Under-threes go free.

Santa sortie

A WHITE Christmas in the company of orca whales, leopard seals, Adelie penguins and pintado petrels is on offer to Wildlife Worldwide's (0181- 667 9158) 12-day voyage to the Antarctic Peninsula, leaving on December 16.

The 80-passenger *Marine Adventurer* sails through the Beagle Channel and Drake Passage to spend Christmas Day in the flooded volcanic caldera of Deception Island where it is possible to swim in the thermal waters. A Christmas dinner and a visit from Santa are also promised. The cost is £3,295 for flights, voyage, food and activities, plus $495 (£315) in port dues.

EXPERTS in art, music and archaeology accompany tours organised by Prospect (0181-995 2151). Christmas is one of the rare times to see Venice without all the crowds; Prospect's seven-day tour, leaving on December 22, takes in the city's sights, plus an excursion to Padua to see Giotto's Scrovegni Chapel. The price of £1,050 includes flights, water-taxi transfers, B&B accommodation plus a Christmas lunch.

● *Next week: Christmas* [illegible]

TRAVEL

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LADIES

ARIABLE, sponsoring American author fifty-ish seeks slim, stylish lady journalist, editor or smart arts, science, - legal worker forties who likes Bach, beaches or just talking and mainly quiet eves at home munching healthy foods. Coffee at the British Museum? Please Reply to Box No 7871

ATTRACTIVE, gregarious, slim widow solvent wtm ns mutuling sincere gentleman (60-65) who enjoys life, the countryside and travel to put a bit of zest into living. S.W. area. Photo appreciated. Box No 7904

ATTRACTIVE sensual female (50+) seeks 60-70+ sensual male to enjoy travel, fun, music and artistic ventures but above all companionship. Rochdale Bucks borders. Box No 7869

ATTRACTIVE Irish widow 60+ many interests wtm someone in the medical profession. Box Box No 7759

BLONDE lady based in southern Spain, she 12, 5'8" mid 50's seeks happy loving fit gentleman who likes travelling, dogs, and fun in the sun. Please send photo to Box No 7946

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BUSY, pref. lady 34, honest loyal, dependable, of Oriental origin seeks company of sincere, n/s educated gentleman of high integrity, emotionally & financially secure, to share love of animals, riding, countryside, good food and those fine & simple pleasures in life. Long term commitment desired ! Midlands Box 7922

BUSY working mum (adult children) late 40s (interests inc. theatre, music, architecture) wtm n/s easy going man with grsh. N.London. Box 7897

CHISWICK/Richmond. Four attractive, intelligent, warm and well adjusted professional women, who enjoy life and have a good sense of fun are looking for men (49-63) with similar qualities to share social activities, and, if the chemistry is right - romance. Box 7867

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GENTLEMEN - look no further! If you live in the West Midlands/Warwickshire. Call Elite Introductions for the professional, confidential service with free membership to Elite Leisure. 0121 223 3814

GOOD INVESTMENT. This bright, stylish, vaccactive late 40's lady, 5'8, blue eyes, red/brown hair, independent lifestyle, well adjusted to divorce, seeks fund manager to enhance and develop her portfolio. To include usual social & cultural exchanges, love of skiing, walking, hot air ballooning. Comfortable village location (60 miles north of London), but mobile. Suit civilized, cheery successful man of some standing, familiar with this sort of challenge. Excellent potential rewards. Box No 7923

HOMELY but attractive mature lady, enjoys travel, history, learning seeks kindly gentleman with honourable intentions. Box No 7912

HUGE heart, big personality, head screwed on and intelligent! Central London. Seeks similar male 30-40 for fantastic relationship Box no 7910

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LATVIA based charming, fun-loving, well educated 38 year old creative female (fashion artist) wants to start a new life. If you are optimistic, intelligent and with good sense of humour, please write and send a photo to Box No 7651

LIVELY, attractive, grown-up lady, seeks genuine n/s hons 45-60 to share her love of art, music, theatre, travel and life. Photo please. London/East Midlands. Reply to Box 7921

LOST Treasure seeks shellfer (no ship wrecks please). Slim, young lady 41, attractive, vivacious, opera and wine loving. Are you also professional, well travelled, handsome, sociable with GSOH? Ideally, aged 39-50, London and S. East. Photo preferred Please Reply to Box No 7870

MODERATELY scatty ex-Scot based Bexley/Orpington seeks easy-flowing friend, with sociable sensibilities. (50's,60's) Please Reply to Box No 7904

MAGNUM of Krug champagne 1946 vintage wishes to have her cork popped! Still very effervescent and bubbly, guaranteed to make your eyes sparkle, however she needs a collector to handle her firmly. Laid down in Kent, Surrey, Sussex cellar. Are you the carrier and of similar vintage to complement this fine wine? Please Reply to Box No 7818

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NE M.Banks well spoken attractive lady 5'8, 45 and friendly likes antiques, travel, gardens, likes good things seeks similar man. Photo. Box 7846

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PRETTY woman poet, slim 5'6 seeks n/s arts loving 50s man. Photo. Berks Box 7924

SLIM, divorcee, 57" graduate, 48, loves city and country life, seeks London-based divorced man, graduate, 47-53 with or without kids. Please Reply to Box No 7846

SMALL advert, big service. Call Club Encounters today on 0800 141 141

SOCIABLE, lively, attractive Dorset lady, seeks fun loving, interesting man 48-55 for sharing and caring times together. Box 7891

SOUTHERN Belle 26, stunning 5'9" blonde, blue eyed, wildly amusing woman WITH 20 to 37, successful, her down to earth man who has integrity, understanding, commitment, lives life like there is no tomorrow. Send photo London SW to Box No 7942

STANDARD model female, 48, 5'6, slim, n/s, divorced, reasonable body work, good working class background, interested in sports model male, some wear and tear acceptable but no amputations or parts. Leicester. Send photo please London/S.Midlands Box 7941

TALL, attractive, athletic girl, late 30s, who enjoys outdoor leisure (water skiing, walking and more) and indoor pleasures (theatre, entertaining etc) seeks happy fun loving man 40s upwards to dance through life! London. Box 7686

WYKACIOUS attractive, slim, leggy blonde, 40s, fun loving, caring, genuine, WLTM tall, attractive, sensitive, southern gentleman, late thirties 40-50 for fun, friendship, romance and possibly more. Photo appreciated Pref. London/Surrey. Box 7920

WHIMSICAL American professional, pretty, petite, charming, residing Perks, WLTM handsome, sensitive man 55-65 to unpack cartons of solitude together. Photo appreciated. Please Reply to Box No 7712

SATURDAY RENDEZVOUS

ZZZoom Wake up! Club Encounters is open Saturday & Sunday Call free 0800 141 141

IF you feel like searching for the stars you will find me there. Intuitive, sensual, mostly blonde, slim widow hoping to meet successful partner in his 60's (5'7" min.) Can you match a well travelled charismatic female female. London. Photo please.Box No 7565

INTELLIGENT, attractive, sensitive, expressive lady, young 62, seeks a repentive and reliable friend, 60-65, with wit & a passion for classical music. London. Box No 7690

JUST 50 but still a lovely laughing lady with a Cambridge Degree and a Cordon Bleu hoping to meet a kind intelligent fellow for interesting conversation. Box No 7668

LIVELY lady, 60, looking and feeling much younger, slim, attractive brunette. Interests: Classical music, painting. Dorset and good food and wine. If you are 65+ and n/s why not write and tell me about yourself? N. London. Photo please. Reply to Box No 7665

OXBRIDGE Gem beautiful salon (Bath/Pub) lady doctor. Elegant 5'6" Christian, seeking intelligent gentleman gentleman to make her sparkle forever. London. Photo appreciated. Reply to Box No 7864

PROF female, 48, recently to London. Interests: music, computing, travel. Seeks honest honest, unpretentious male to enjoy it appreciate London with, to laugh, have fun & good social life. Are there any such gems out there? AL-A Please Reply to Box No 7694

STOP. Vibrant, Stunningly Attractive lady of the Midlands, blonde, mid 40s, with money for life. If you want real feelings with a future, write with photo Box 7643

GENTLEMEN

ACTIVE and caring Baptistchm with presence, 65, seeks attractive lady 45-55 with whom to share and care. Photo appreciated. Kent. Box 7938

ARTISTIC, artiulate, achiever, successful solvent Company Director with a passion for his vocation and a love for life has endured at his mid 40s with a full complement of hair, teeth, marbles and wannabes only to realise that his life has lacked enrichment in recent times. 57, n/s and Cotswold based (although never content to cue with the sheep) he now seeks an attractive curvaceous, vivacious, unsophisticated kind and caring, open minded, independent lady. Reasons? Partner Sexhunter? Free friend? Occasional companion? Nothing in life is guaranteed but what one is open to all possibilities when known what may result... An inspired reply with returnable photo please to Box 7738

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ARTS GRADUATE; seven, articulate, adventurous; young n/s 49; lean, stylish, 6'; good looks/nature/humour. Own business. Seeks similar, slim, generous soulmate for companionship/caring. London. Reply Box no 7948

AS Summer glides to Autumn gold a tall stunning, attractive, successful, cultured man 40 living in Bath and West London seeks a fun loving younger woman to shelter from the rain with. I love travel, cinema, theatre, restaurants and dinner parties, music, hoeing 5lc pottering in the country. I am romantic, passionate, generous and good humoured and I am looking for a woman to spoil and pamper as long times are included. If you are a sensual, confident woman who enjoys the finer things in life and would enjoy some delicious, exciting times then write to me with your telephone number to Box No. 7770

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CAPRICORN 50ish n/s, seeks attractive 60ish, looking for a woman fun loving n/s person who enjoys perhaps golf, sailing, travel, theatre, walking, dining, family values, some aspiration. Hopefully Widower, family have flown the nest, free from all emotional baggage. London/Essex. All replies answered photo greatly appreciated. Reply Box 7955

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DEFINITELY the wrong time to be going to bed. Whoever (49), looking for fun-loving and giving lady 25-45 with GSOH and n/s. Photo and letter greatly appreciated Hexy. Reply to Box 7934

ENERGETIC retired, fun loving New Forest widower 60+ seeks 50+ companion to share enjoyment in country life, dining out and travel. Bx 7939

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STRIKING, very young 43, 6', fair haired, charming, attractive, shy man, careless with money, I laugh, sensual, bit bossy, unencumbered, happy, single parent 2 teenage daughters in country, am weekdays in London but working North Israel. Seeking good looking independent woman to share life. Reply Box 7936

SUCCESSFUL, attractive professional (45), tall, slim, blue eyes, seeks affectionate female under 40 to share moments in cinema, theatre, opera, classical music, food, wine, travel and sport. Photo appreciated. Box No 7285

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GAY man London/Home Counties seeking long term relationship - ring Significant Others - the gay dating agency together. 0171 494 0009

AMICABLY divorced, solvent, healthy, early retired late 50's, living in aspiration wishes to meet n/s lively woman with GSOH and broad interests especially travel, antiques, art, books. Tell me your interests and what you'd look for in a friend or partner. ABIA Please Reply to Box No 7567

ARE you looking for fun and adventure on a Country Estate? Must be slim, attractive, vivacious & caring. 35-45. I am slim, attractive, 6', divorced, 46 year old country gent, full of fun & romance. Photo appreciated. Box No 7636

ATTRACTIVE 32, 6' businessman part ladies/media/management heritage. Likes the good things in life from oversees travel to a simple dinner for two. WLTM caring, intelligent attractive woman prepared for romance to spoil him. Box No 7607

ATTRACTIVE 6ft prof man, 38, tall, dark, very good looking, loving, affectionate therapist, theatre, travel. Hgh. Seeks warm female for fun, friendship, romance. London/E. Please Reply to Box No 7637

CHEERFUL 39, London-based, tall, educated, well-travelled, easy-going, sincere chap WLTM pretty, N/S, slim, sporty 25-35 lady of similar background to share fun, laughter and romance. Letter & photo please. Please Reply to Box No 7640

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THE TIMES

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Dinner at Top Hotel Kensington
Cocktail: Top Hotel Strand
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Cocktail Party Top Hotel Croydon
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Cocktail Party Bromley
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North Wales Lunch
Chester Social Evening
Nottingham Social Evening
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Brighton Dinner Dance
Northampton Dinner Dance
Huddersfield Social Evening
Southport Dinner
Nottingham Dinner Aquarium
Warwick Dinner Dance
Yorkshire Dinner Dance
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Chesterfield Lunch and Walk
Nottingham under-45s
Stafford Dinner
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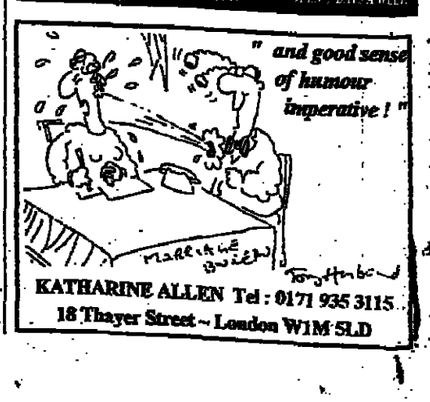

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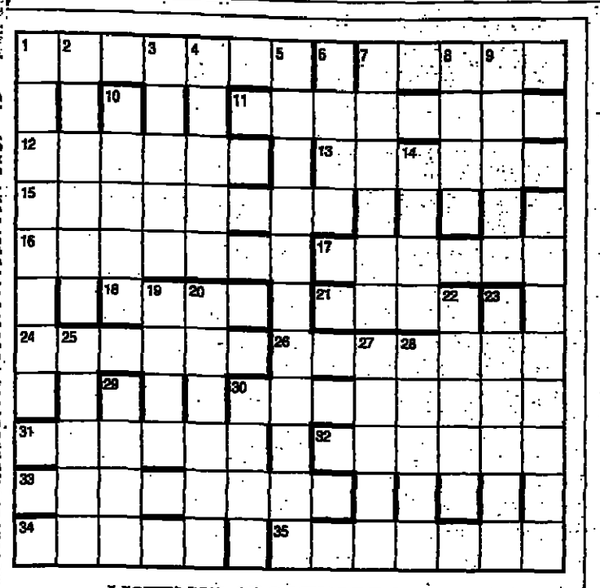
THE LISTENER CROSSWORD

No 3431: Three writers by Mr Lemon



ONE or more letters have to be omitted from the answer to each clue before it is entered in the grid.

Definitions are to the full word, subsidiary indications to the grid entry. Numbers in brackets always refer to the grid entry.

The single letter omitted from each of 32 answers in clue order describe the approach of the THREE WRITERS, the remaining five clues drop a hint as to style. *Chambers* (1993) is recommended.

Two of the THREE WRITERS are unclued, solvers should find and highlight the third.

ACROSS

1 Routine clerks can be self-assertive people (7)
7 Separate exercise in plain (5)
11 Sea-water's bad for birds (8)
12 Scotsman returns to take on Richard the Covenanter (6)
13 Song about king's skin colour (6)
15 Raps having no king among high cards (8)
16 Cable revised preview with report's introduction for Vatican (7)
17 Silver matrix absent in molten rocks (6)
18 Plaster of Paris ships in fashion (4)
21 Expects kisses (4)
24 The President once — a cutter of wood? (6)
26 Tension doesn't begin to relieve worry (7)
30 Old Tories excited harborer (8)
31 Estaminets keep a bit of Riesling inside flasks (6)
32 Warning sounds as golf shot goes outside centre of belt (6)
33 Rapid eye movement timer worked by heart (8)
34 Councillor has pouch for a fox (5)
35 Torpedo goes around during brief constant measure of emission (7)

DOWN

2 Aphrodite's fluorescent salt (6)
3 Listen to inside of male's chest (5)
4 Old courtesy one finally gets to see in France (5)
5 Singer drew grebes swimming round lake (11)
6 Calls for woman's work basket (4)
7 Scraper is brought up round block to stop wheel (6)
8 Fort with exterior of round building stone (4)
9 Club price is cut at last (5)
10 German follows one big awkward girl — a truly monstrous bird! (5)
14 They keep the rain off school piano (4)
19 Heartless group of teachers forged paper (4)
20 Season in charge of the moon (6)
22 Yes! Forward's foot slipped back (5)
23 Leaders of profession mostly chosen to lecture (6)
25 Terribly drear worshipper (5)
27 Went for a swim — in the Tay — thereupon grandchild died (5)
28 As an example Prokofiev's sister exercised at first in judo costume (5)
29 Stifles restraints — figuratively speaking (4)
30 A swelling that is difficult to deal with (4)

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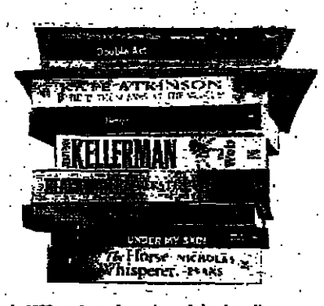
W

WATERSTONE'S

The winner will receive a Waterstone's book token worth £75. Five runners-up will each receive a book token worth £10



Waterstone's first opened a bookshop in 1982, and now has a branch in virtually every major town and city in the UK and Ireland. Each of its 100-odd branches has at least 50,000 titles in stock and can order any book currently in print in the UK. Out-of-Print Booksearch, 01892 522700. Mailing Service and Signed First Editions, 01225 448596. For your nearest branch of Waterstone's, call 0181-742 3800.

Solution and notes for No 3428: Snags by Columba

H	I	S	T	A	L	C	A	T	R	A	S
A	S	A	E	T	E	R	B	O	O	B	Y
U	M	B	R	E	Y	O	M	W	P	U	E
L	O	O	N	R	O	P	I	N	E	S	S
G	W	T	M	E	W	P	S	Y	C	H	O
A	L	E	E	N	R	E	D	P	O	L	L
M	O	U	N	T	E	R	I	I	C	H	A
M	A	R	N	I	E	A	R	C	K	I	
A	L	L	I	A	N	C	E	S	A		
U	T	E	T	N	A	L	C	A		D	H
R	O	T	C	H	C	A	T	I	O	N	A
N	U	T	H	A	T	C	H	C	O	I	N

Extra and ommitted letters gave THE LADY VANISHES, VERTIGO, FRENZY and THE BIRDS. These, and the entries PSYCHO, MARNIE, SABOTEUR and ROPE, were films directed by Alfred Hitchcock. His custom of making brief appearances in his films was reflected by the oblique (ie, slanting) appearance in the grid of his surname, indicated as a snag (HITCH) with one of the birds (COCK).

The winner is Mrs Janet Ferris of Leeds, Yorkshire. The runners up are Clive Thompson of Sheffield, Yorkshire; Brenda J. Widger of Altrincham, Cheshire; Mike Gates of Sydenham, London; Dr P.A.K. Covey-Crump of Cheltenham, Gloucestershire; D.A.T. Millar of Beflast, Northern Ireland.

BRIDGE

by Robert Sheehan

FOLLOW AN expert's thinking on this hand:

North: ♠- ♥KQ65 ♦A93 ♣AKQJ42
South: ♠K842 ♥J932 ♦K5 ♣863

Contract: Five Clubs by West.
Lead: the eight of diamonds

This was the bidding, with West the dealer, vulnerable against not at rubber bridge:

W	N	E	S
1 C	1 S	1 NT	3 S
3 NT	Pass	Pass	4 D
4 H	4 S	Pass	Pass
5 C	All Pass		

What is your plan? You have six tricks in clubs, two in diamonds, and two in hearts. An eleventh trick will be easy enough if clubs are two-two — you will be able to ruff a diamond in dummy. So the first move after winning the diamond king is to draw a round of trumps. South shows out, discarding a diamond. Now what?

It seems the most likely explanation of South's Four Diamond bid is that he has six or more diamonds. So playing for a diamond ruff won't work now — North will be able to ruff high in front of dummy. You draw the remainder of North's trumps, and play an extra round for the lurkers. South's four discards are the seven and ten of diamonds and two spades, and North discards a spade. How do you think the hearts lie?

If North has four you can pick up the suit by leading the king and queen. But can North have four hearts? No — he must have at least five spades, and has shown up with four clubs and one diamond. That means the only player who can hold four hearts is South.

You lay down the king of hearts, hoping South will win if he has the ace. But the king of hearts holds. That leaves this position:

North: ♠- ♥Q65 ♦A9 ♣2
South: ♠K8 ♥J93 ♦5 ♣-

You continue with a low heart to the jack, on which North discards a spade. South has to take the jack with the ace, or else you can lead back towards the queen. He wins and exits with the queen of diamonds.

Do you see what is happening? Everyone is down to four cards and South has to keep a winning diamond and two hearts. You play off your last trump, discarding a spade from dummy.

To keep those three key red cards South has to discard a spade, and so you exit with the nine of diamonds. At trick twelve South has to lead from the ten-eight of hearts to give you the last two tricks. You have brought off a "strip squeeze". The full deal:

North: ♠AJ10965 ♥4 ♦82 ♣10975
West: ♠- ♥KQ65 ♦A93 ♣AKQJ42
East: ♠K842 ♥J932 ♦K5 ♣863
South: ♠Q73 ♥A1087 ♦QJ10764 ♣-

Notice the importance of playing the second round of hearts to the jack. If West plays a second high heart from hand, South ducks and now no squeeze can operate.

WORDANSWERS

Answers from page 32

IMPALEMENT
(c) Transfixion, being pierced by a stake through the fundament.

USUFRUCT
(a) The right of using or benefiting from someone else's property without damaging or diminishing the property itself.

GAMBRINOUS
(b) Full of beer. An eponym of Gambrinus, a mythical Flemish king.

RENIFORM
(a) Kidney-shaped.

CHESS

by Raymond Keene

GARRY KASPAROV, the world champion, has often expressed his admiration for that great genius of attack, Alexander Alekhine. At his height, in the tournaments of San Remo 1930 and Bled 1931, Alekhine bowled over his opponents with remarkable ease, almost irrespective of whether he was playing with White or Black. Chess is not all logic and analysis, there is a tremendous psychological element, too, one often underestimated or ignored by the fashionable chess texts which simply give reams of moves, without background information.

What can be the explanation for the sudden collapse of a strong player, even with the normally advantageous white pieces? In the case of Alekhine, and now with Kasparov, it can be a terrifying prospect sitting across the chessboard, facing the strongest player in the world. This tremendous psychological strength, evinced by both Alekhine and Kasparov at their best, accounts just as much for such players' superlative performances as their technical skill.

Interestingly, Kasparov's failure against IBM's Deep Blue computer might also be traced to his psychological power. Flesh and blood players can be intimidated, silicon chips cannot. When playing against Deep Blue, Kasparov simply has to rely on his skill at the game itself. His fiercely energetic personality would have held no terrors for the machine. A contrasting case was this week's game against a rising star in the American chess firmament. White was so over-awed by Kasparov's charisma that he put up no fight at all.

White: Tal Shaked; Black: Garry Kasparov; Tilburg, September 1997

Grunfeld Defence

1 d4 Nf6 2 c4 g6 3 Nc3 d5

The Grunfeld Defence, Kasparov's main alternative to the King's Indian, which is based on ... d6 rather than the challenging ... d5. By playing the Grunfeld, Black invites White to set up a huge pawn centre.

4 cxd5 Nxd5 5 e4 Nxc3 6 bxc3 Bg7 7 Be3 c5 8 Qd2 Qa5

Kasparov wastes no time in implementing a massive strike against White's pawn front.

9 Rb1

Preparing a manoeuvre which simply assists Black's schemes. I would prefer 9 Rc1.

9 ... b6 10 Bb5+ Bd7 11 Be2

And here 11 Bd3 seems more natural.

11 ... Bc6 12 Bd3

The unfortunate consequence of his previous move. Of course, White cannot push Black's queen's bishop out of play with 12 d5, on account of 12 ... Bxc3 winning White's queen.

12 ... Nd7 13 Ne2 Rd8 14 f3

An unnecessary precaution. 14 0-0 at once is stronger.

14 ... 0-0 15 h4

White's list of misdemeanours in the opening phase of this game is legion. With White's development incomplete and the centre fluid, this wing strike is entirely inappropriate. Black can easily block the further advance of White's pawn and promptly does so.

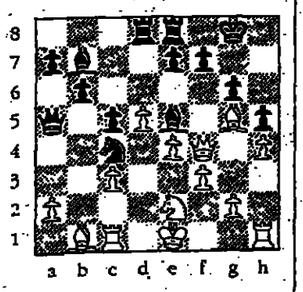
15 ... h5 16 Bg5 Rfe8 17 Rc1 Bb7 18 d5

White now dreams of following up with c4, cementing his centre and trading queens. However, Kasparov does not give him time for this luxury.

18 ... Ne5 19 Bb1 Nc4 20 Qf4

A colossal blunder to cap his previous inept play. White had to put his queen on a safer square though even 20 Qc2 Na3 or 20 Qd3 Ba6 are highly uncomfortable.

20 ... Be5



White resigns

White's queen is trapped in broad daylight.

WINNING MOVE

By Raymond Keene
Chess Correspondent

White to play. This position is from the game Koch - Neiman, France 1997.

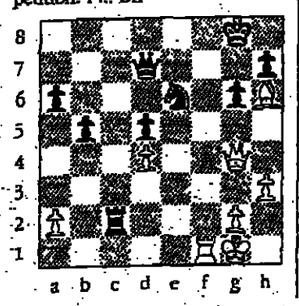
White's bishop on h6 and his rook on f1 severely restrict the black king. How did White finish off?

The first correct answer drawn on Thursday will win a year's subscription to the Staunton Society.

The answer will be published next Saturday.

Last week's winner: S. E. Crow, Almond Path, Glenrothes, Fife.

Solution to last week's competition: 1 ... Bf1



COMPUTER GAMES AND PASTIMES

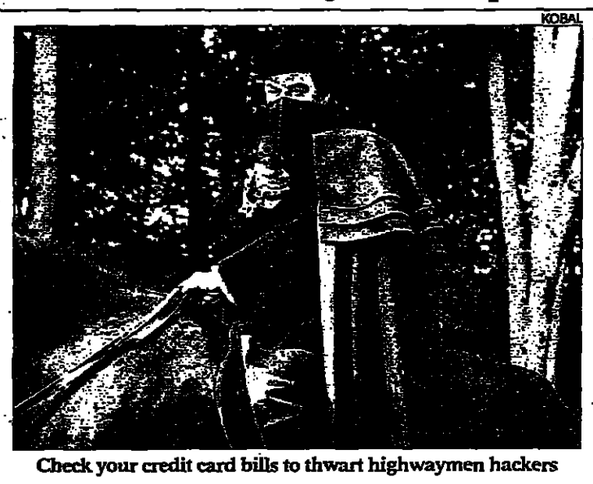
by Tim Wapshott

THE race is on to improve security on the Internet, and software developers who come up with the most widely adopted security systems will make a killing.

Security poses two questions for home users. How safe is personal information in e-mails? And how safe are credit card details in cyberspace?

When it comes to confidentiality, few things beat real letters sent in sealed envelopes. But on the Internet, e-mails are dispatched to oblivion, 9,999 times out of ten reaching their destination — a cyberspace pigeonhole — with lightning speed. But we cannot be sure that no one else has read them. After all, this is the age of the sophisticated hacker, who can find his or her way into most places, including corporate bank accounts and government departments — the security of credit card transactions over the World Wide Web is the latest poser for the chattering computing classes.

Many goods and services can already be purchased online, usually by entering your credit card details. Some traders have staff standing by to take such details on a voice number if you are worried. In the past six months I have made several purchases on the Internet in the hope of unearthing something untoward, but all transactions were honoured correctly and I have no complaints. Vigilance is the best weapon. If you make purchases on the Internet with a credit card, check every statement carefully. As well as potential thieves, virtual vandals can also threaten to invade our own worlds if we link to the planet electronically. After the threat of virus comes the headache of vandal programmes, which can steal or destroy data files, erase or damage hard drives, and even reroute modems when you log on to the Internet or other computer systems. You need a sterile environment set aside in the computer to place "downloadables" and run them without fear of interfering with any other programmes on your hard disc. The answer is eSafe Protect. All interactivity with the Internet is held in a neutral zone and this programme monitors information for rogue trickery. It also gets excited if it spots data being downloaded or extracted without the user's knowledge.



KOBAL

Check your credit card bills to thwart highwaymen hackers

The software serves many other purposes, one of which can be a godsend to parents of computer-literate youngsters: Internet access control and timed Web surfing. The programme takes up only 5MB of memory, is Windows 95 and NT-compatible, and sells for £69, although with a little vigilance you could pick it up for £49. You can learn more about eSafe Protect at http://www.esafe.co.uk.

One final word of safety. If you have a Nintendo 64 or SNES games console, scrutinise the mains plug because Hitachi has just recalled a faulty batch. Look underneath the plug, between the two lower pins, for the product mark "Hitachi HE-25". Should you see this, call Hitachi's helpline on 0500 030 030 for a free replacement mains lead.

☐ ABOUT to be unplugged is Cyberspace Thirty Six, which closes on October 14. You could win a Kodak DC25 digital camera worth £200. We have three to be won. All you have to do is describe vividly your favourite photograph in exactly 100 words. The competition is open to all ages. Send your entry, with your name, age, address and telephone number, to: Cyberspace Thirty-Six, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN. You may also send e-mail entries to cyber@dircon.co.uk. Normal *Times* competition rules apply.

Internet art, Metro, page 24

TWO BRAINS ANSWERS

Solutions to the puzzles found on page 30

Question 1:
125. Successive numbers are obtained by adding 1, 3, 9, 27. Thus (the numbers are powers of 3) the next number is 81. 44 + 81 = 125.

Question 2:
Aquinas. The others are scientists.

LATEST SOFTWARE

WHEN Walt Disney shuffled off this mortal coil, he became one of the earliest cryonics guinea pigs, being frozen in space and time until the day of his big freeze. This prompted Alexei Sayle's fine film credit joke: "Walt Disney in a fridge presents . . ."

Were Walt alive today, he might feel a slight chill of disappointment as he realised that sometimes the Disney magic is wearing thin. In America the latest full-length animation, Hercules, bombed at the box office, or at least it did not make the squillions expected.

The moody animation gives Greek legend a heavy American slant and is a mess of corny jokes and dated music. It also proves that Danny DeVito is no Robin Williams when it comes to witty one-liners. But the obligatory spin-off game of the same name from Disney Interactive is another synopsis altogether. This action game has ten levels of gameplay, "from zero to hero", with Hercules running in all directions seeking out hidden areas and handy hot-spots.

Available for PC and PlayStation, the game is easily as lively and good-looking as Crash Bandicoot. The graphics are perfection and, run on a fast computer, the entire experience boasts many added depths and qualities so desperately missing in the movie.

■ **Verdict: 8 out of 10. Dreadful Disney film makes masterful platform game. £39.99.**

DISNEY

Hercules: better than the film

WHAT type of game would you call a shaky first-person perspective job where you zap the odd moving block before it zaps you? A business sim, of course. ***Forbes Corporate Warrior***, released here by Zablac Entertainment, promises a business strategy game to rival all others but delivers, at least five years late, a turkey.

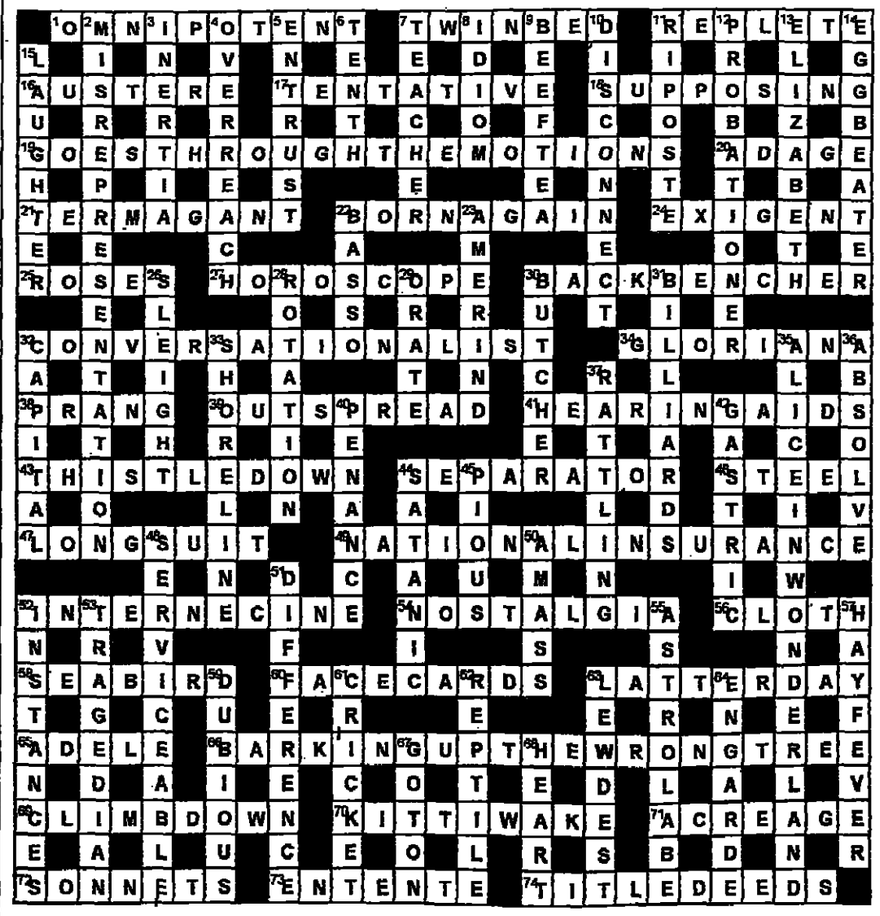
Links with a concept and ultimate reality rarely come more tenuous than this. An impossible marriage of two gaming styles, the idea is that you blast away at the competition — moving blocks and buildings in a rectangular grid — by combining fire power with number-crunching and a price index. It is as feasible as trying to write a letter on a calculator.

A business game should bring alive the Eighties entrepreneur in all of us, giving us the smell of money and success or suicide-leaping losses. This merely brings fury when, after many hours of zapping, and price or stock tweaking (to effect the strength of your fire power, naturally), you realise that this is as good as it gets and you have been taken to the cleaners.

The CD-Rom runs on Windows 95 and you can play over the network with friends. Whether you will find opponents willing to play you a second time is another matter.

■ **Verdict: 3 out of 10. Worthless, bust business game. £29.99.**

SOLUTION TO JUMBO 129



The winner of an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £105, is Stephen Crampton of St Albans in Hertfordshire

هكذا من الإصل

MODERN MANNERS

by John Morgan

Q I read that the "grandest way to skin a pear is said to be with a teaspoon". I tried this at a dinner party recently, but it did not work and people giggled at my attempts. Where did you come across this arcane notion?
— Edith Brownlow, London W8

A I am so sorry that you had problems, but I promise you it is a *bona fide* method. The technique is as follows: choose a large, ripe pear (a nice fat Comice is best) and use as small a spoon as possible. Cut the pear in half crosswise (not lengthwise avocado-fashion) just under halfway down. Starting with the lower, larger half, use the spoon to gently prise the flesh from the skin and eat it. You will be left with two empty skins, the core, and the admiration of all those around you.

Q I would like to buy an engagement ring for my girlfriend but I do not want to buy diamonds for personal (and political) reasons. What alternatives are there? I am worried that other precious stones may already have associations not appropriate for an engagement ring.
— John Ilkley, London W10

A There are three alternative precious stones. Sapphires come in several shades other than the traditional blue, such as yellow, pink, purple, green and a pale blue; rubies, which can look magnificent (particularly the Burmese pigeon blood variety); and emeralds which, for all their mysterious beauty, are brittle and chip easily. Semi-precious stones such as aquamarines, amethysts and citrines are popular, but are not as suitable as precious stones. As for inappropriate stones, avoid opals, which are soft and carry unlucky associations.

Q I have to attend the funeral of a close but classy relative. I noticed that Cherie Blair did not wear a hat to the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales. Is this now the fashion, or merely bad form?
— Clara Hamilton, Wiltshire

A Mrs Blair was very conspicuous in her hat-less state and obviously chose to ignore three important conventions. First, it is traditional at such occasions to wear a hat in the presence of the Sovereign; second, it is still usual to wear hats to "important" funerals; third, general mourners should always dress in a way that is appropriate to the bereaved family. I noticed that the women members of the Royal Family and the Spencer clan all sported hats. I suggest you follow their example.

Q I would be interested to know your thoughts regarding the correct placing of one's knife and fork after finishing the main course. My parents insisted that the fork should be placed on the plate with the prongs facing down, the knife alongside. The reason for this (I was told) is because a former king of England once thumped his fist on to his plate, impaling himself on his own upturned fork; thereafter he decreed that all forks should face downwards. I seem to be very much alone in this as the rest of the world seems to leave the fork with the prongs facing upwards.
— A.W. Trustham, Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire

A You are unusual, but not entirely alone. The habit you describe may have been instigated by Charles II, who was keen on French customs. However, by the *mid-18th century* the convention had been reversed to the prongs facing upwards. This served two purposes: to show off increasingly elaborate decoration on forks, and to prevent the prongs from scratching the delicate painted china of the day. Prongs upwards remains the proper procedure.

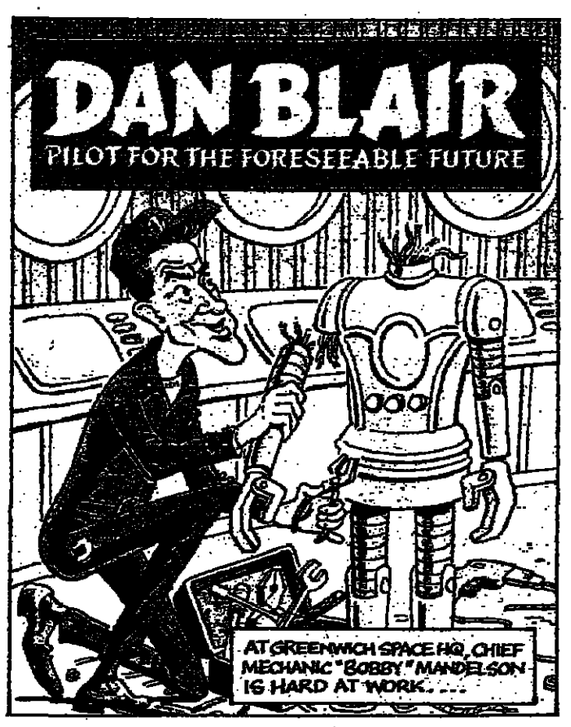
Q How can you politely tell somebody they have bad breath?
— A. Pennington, London E1

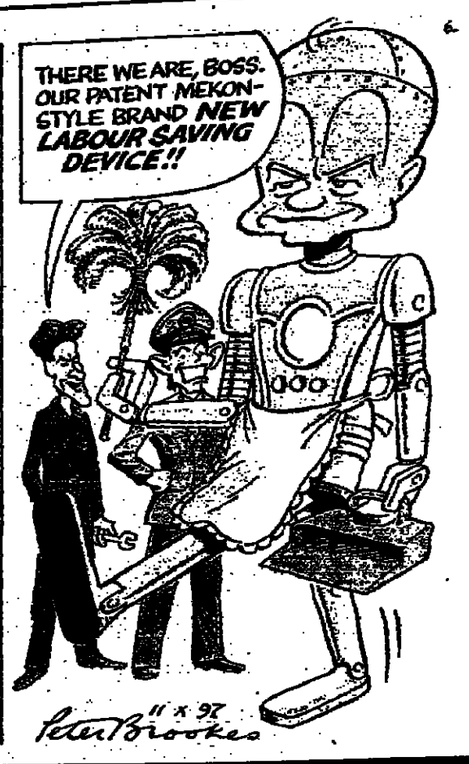
A This is a delicate issue. Unless the breath is too foul to bear, it remains good manners to suffer in silence. If, however, it is consistently bad, then you could say to the offender, "I would not normally mention this, but I notice that your breath has been less than healthy-smelling recently. I read in a magazine that such symptoms can suggest a serious underlying condition. Perhaps you should see a doctor." In this way you appear to be putting concerns for the individual's health before your own sensory comfort.

Q Is it bad manners not to invite one child's in-laws to another child's wedding? Our son got married last year, and the bride's parents gave them a splendidly lavish wedding. Now our daughter is to be married early next year, but our finances are limited, and the guest list has to be much tighter. We get on perfectly well with our son's in-laws, but as they don't live anywhere near us, we hardly ever see them.
— Name and address withheld

A Wedding guest lists probably cause more heartache and soul-searching than anything else. However, to be invited to a wedding is an honour rather than a right. If you are fond of your daughter-in-law, and she is close to her parents, then it would probably be wise to invite them so as not to cause wounded feelings. If this is not the case, then you are under no obligation to invite anybody's in-laws.

● *John Morgan is associate editor of* GQ. *Send your queries to Morgan's Modern Manners,* The Times, *Weekend, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN.*





WORD-WATCHING

IMPALEMENT
a. Blanching
b. Ostracism
c. Transfixion

USUFRUCT
a. Use
b. The Kiwi fruit
c. A Carthaginian magistrate

GAMBRINOUS
a. Keen to marry
b. Beery
c. A flexible mind

RENIFORM
a. Kidney-shaped
b. Held-over class
c. To tell again

Answers on page 31

TWOBRAINS

MEMORISING a shuffled pack of cards may not sound easy but it is possible, and it is a good way of assessing your current memory skills. Try with half a pack at first and then test your results:
26 cards in 30 minutes — above average
52 cards in 30 minutes — excellent
52 cards in 15 minutes — better than 90 per cent of the population
52 cards in 3 minutes — good enough to compete in world championships

Question 1:
What is the missing number?
4 5 8 17 44 ???

Question 2:
Who is the odd one out?
Einstein, Rutherford, Curie, Aquinas, Newton

Answers on page 31.

RAYMOND KEENE

CROSSWORDS

by Brian Greer

Since last week, another example of my "pure ignorance" has come to light. My apologies to all the people of the reinstated county of Rutland of which Oakham is no longer the *former* county town (21 across in 20,597). In dealing with points raised in readers' letters, I propose to refer to correspondents by name when appropriate, so if you do not want this to happen, please indicate when you write. I try to answer all letters that I consider require a response, but this can take some time. (As well as doing this job, I work part-time as a university teacher.)

One issue that has been prominent in the postbag has been resolved: as you can see, the crosswords on these two pages are no longer back-to-back. As for my mail in general, a common query is whether the crossword is getting more difficult. Subjectively, based on some 30 years of solving and more than 20 years as a contributor, I do not discern any marked trend. It may be, however, that since I have taken over the editorship I have reduced the number of easy clues that Edmund Akenhead, my predecessor but one, characterised as "letting the dog see the rabbit". One tradition that I have maintained is keeping the Monday crossword easier, out of consideration for those wearily beginning another week of toil.

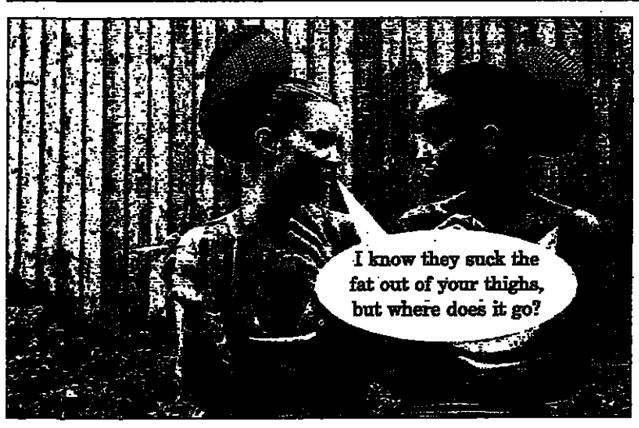
Another common inquiry concerns the numbers of entries sent in for the weekly competition puzzles and the Jumbos. In fact, nobody at *The Times* has more than the roughest of estimates (running into several thousand in each case) since the procedure is only to check enough solutions to find prizewinners.

My most pleasurable experience is opening letters that express appreciation of our efforts in general, or of particular puzzles or clues. In some future column I will write about favourite clues (as suggested by Hazel Goldman of Brize Norton, herself a crossword compiler). If you have personal favourites, please let me know. **"Rake over the coals (3,4,2,4)"** is one of mine.

Hazel Goldman also raised the longstanding problem of what to call a person who creates crosswords — setter, composer, compiler, cruciverbalist? Any suggestions? Whatever we call them, would-be ones submit many crosswords to me. Next week's column will offer such aspirants some realistic advice.

● *Brian Greer is Crossword Editor of* The Times

PICTURE LINE



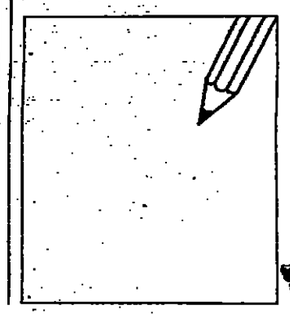
The winning caption for last week's picture competition was submitted by Karen Mayne, of Ryde on the Isle of Wight

READERS are invited to suggest what the Queen might be saying.

This picture, recently printed in *The Times*, will appear again next week with an entry chosen from those submitted.

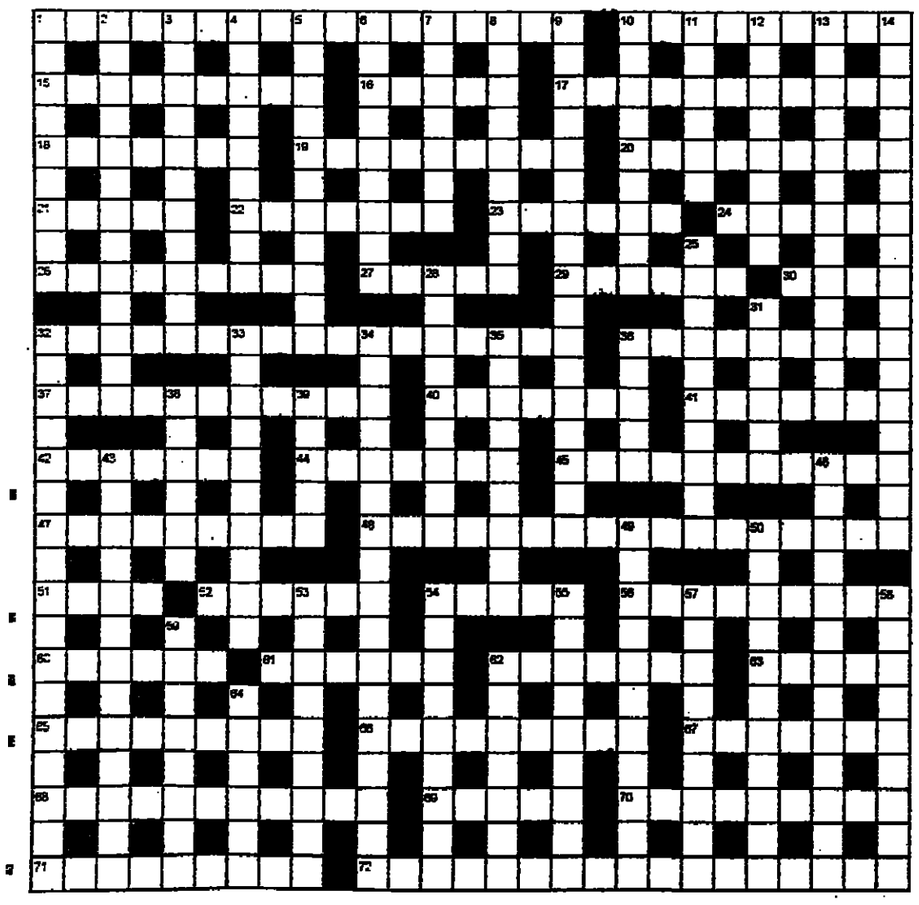
Send "speech bubble" suggestions on a postcard with your name and address to PictureLine, Weekend, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, E1 9XN.

The Editor's decision is final. The closing date for entries is Wednesday, October 15.



JUMBO CROSSWORD 131

The prize for the first correct solution to be opened will be an Alfred Dunhill AD2000, worth £105, the world's first interchangeable, capless rollerball/ballpoint pen. Streamlined and made from silver-plated black resin, it has perfect writing balance. Entries should be sent to: Jumbo Crossword 131, *The Times*, 1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN to arrive by Monday October 20. The name of the winner will be published in Weekend on Saturday, October 27



NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

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..... POSTCODE .....

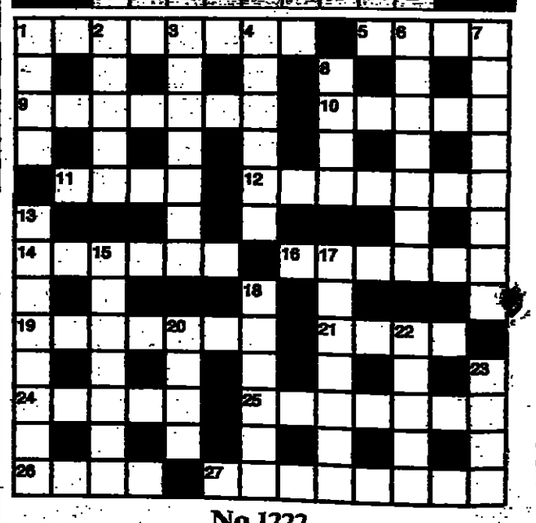
ACROSS

1 Regular exercise is manager's first approach, as a rule (17)
10 Fixing roof at church? Object about it (9)
15 Inexusable reason for bliss (9)
16 Caught near start of play, they grow prickly (5)
17 Is love at all possibly a stimulant? (3,8)
18 Make amends for one sent into exile by English (7)
19 Sweetheart screen idol changed only at the end (9)
20 Tree I chop as it is damaged (9)
21 Philosopher appears to secure door with key (5)
22 A doctor in charge injected into one's feet (7)
23 Slow passages, having left Greek city (6)
24 The old soldiers I encountered from a Muslim country (6)
26 Exploiting a fierce person to secure victory (7,2)
27 How one woman might be toasted in wine . . . (5)
29 . . . and here's wine for another (6)
30 His monument, if required, can be viewed with circumspection (4)
32 Guy wanted to receive great applause (5,3,5,4)
36 Neighbourhood watch with a regular programme of events? (4,5)
37 Sack directors — that's for revealing information in public (6,5)
40 Failing to show appreciation, as dogs may be (7)
41 Club's female supporter about to disappear at last (7)
42 The ability of American academics (7)
44 Model makes little money with a casual garment being worn (7)
45 Maltreated strumpet taken back inside and brought home (11)
47 I'm on trial, initially, with unknown giving evidence (9)
48 Arrangement of soldiers with flag infiltrating forward the whole way (4,4,3,6)
51 RAF heroes, holding the line, took to the air (4)
52 For instance, saint is associated with one Italian town such as this (6)
54 Fish seen around river is ray (5)
56 Attractive strip in publication in London area (3-6)
60 Was angry and removed man from board (6)
61 Note on part of score that provided inspiration for Mendelssohn overture (6)
62 Refer it for review to timber-supplier (3-5)
63 Bore half-heartedly did additional work (5)
65 Does it go with a card table? (4,5)
66 Has experience with lower bids (9)
67 Get out of that, he retorted in addition (7)
68 Mill, for example, designed only for practical purposes (11)
69 Right from the beginning, very inhibited by a hostile reaction (2,3)
70 Precision needed to force to pay bill (9)
71 Old player's son entering the round-the-world voyage (8)
72 How a hair-raising effect may be produced (17)

DOWN

1 Worked on deal, perhaps, and cheated (9)
2 All-rounder's name, on the off chance, I put on a file (3-10)
3 King consumed, consumed by obsession — that's ominous (11)
4 Offering care without hesitation (9)
5 *Line in innovative* TV — the women of the year (11)
6 Cost cut — one pound off? He extends credit beyond the normal (9)
7 Beats a dollar? (7)
8 One fool and I join forces, for a start (9)
9 Monsieur is helping to accommodate English here? That's a lie! (17)
10 Call on help, possibly, needing outside support on course (9)
11 Excite a debauchee about possible partner (6)
12 Cryptic puzzles in which the solutions are partly indicated (8)
13 Nearby group of islanders volunteers to follow dogs (5,8)
14 Papa, a long time ago, made it the basis of our daily schedule (9,8)
25 Located in Oxford Street? Covering a wide range (5-5)
28 Observing defensive construction in great circle (7,2)
31 Boastful talk in evidence when the balloon goes up (3,3)
32 Lenient judgement that's certainly never given (7,2,3,5)
33 Obsession of hunter perhaps, following falcon (10)
34 Plastered beneath the pipe in local church (5,3,9)
35 Gaoler roughed chap up inside part of cell (9)
36 Pronounce characters charming (5)
38 Dog runs off end of cargo boat (6)
39 Cockney's satisfied to pocket a pound for start (5)
43 Niggardly about fruit that's good value for money (4-9)
46 Becoming a novice in order to realise an ambition (6,3,4)
49 Like a tree rising river carried in its midst (11)
50 The unit I can change — it's not accurate (11)
53 Ban from place in ground — police turned up on time (9)
54 Play with celebrity, displaying this for sponsor? (5,4)
55 Traveller's old stuff turned over before the game (5,4)
57 Split about point, with violent speech directed towards centre (2-7)
58 Outside broadcast left before close of play without being at all interesting (9)
59 Wise man's role getting him involved with start of Christianity (8)
62 Pay for king to get deposed . . . (4,3)
64 . . . from kingdom, a law inaugurating independent republic (6)

TIMES TWO CROSSWORD



No 1222

ACROSS

1 Mac (8)
5 Eg top-of-pond film (4)
9 Gov't press-censoring request (1-6)
10 — Keller; — of Troy (5)
11 — Blyton (4)
12 EU food-additive identifier (1,6)
14 New driver's sign (1-5)
16 Part of oyster season (1,5)
19 Batsman's turn (7)
21 June 6, 1944 (1-3)
24 Both (*arch.*); Mark —, author (5)
25 Disease (7)
26 Red gem (4)
27 In adhesive fashion (8)

DOWN

1 Insulting; unpolished (4)
2 NT book after II Peter (1,4)
3 Burma resistance fighter (WW2) (7)
4 Sixth-former's exam (1,5)
6 Son of Sycorax (*Tempest*) (7)
7 State with king (8)
8 You (*arch.*) (4)
13 Monastic walk (8)
15 Script Ventris deciphered (6,1)
17 Note between staves (pian score) (6,1)
18 Informal top (1-5)
20 Socially naff (3-1)
22 One from Bakr (5)
23 Child's guessing game (1,3)

SOLUTION TO NO 1221

ACROSS: 1 Locality 5 Asks 8 Great 9 Boswell 11 Tip 12 Firmament 13 Robust 15 Uganda 18 Mangetout 19 Car 20 Flummox 21 Riven 22 Alto 23 Prudence

DOWN: 1 Lighter 2 Cheap 3 Let off steam 4 Tabard 6 Shebeen 7 Split 10 Slaughtered 14 Banquet 16 Arrange 17 Hoaxer 18 Mafia 19 Coven

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